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*Chairman*: Mr. Mernier . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . (Belgium)

*The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.*

**Agenda items 63 to 79** *(continued)*

**General debate on all disarmament and international security items**

**Mr. Erwa** (Sudan) (*interpretation from Arabic*): It is a pleasure for me to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, as well as the other members of the Bureau, on your election to lead the First Committee this year. I wish to express the Sudan's confidence that you will guide the work of our Committee to the results we hope to achieve.

I wish to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to your predecessor, Mr. Nkgowe of Botswana, for his work as Chairman and his wise guidance of the work of our Committee during the fifty-second session.

The Sudan, while welcoming the international developments and initiatives aimed at eliminating nuclear weapons, still feels that there remains a great deal in the area of nuclear disarmament that the international community must do. I wish here to mention the need to seriously negotiate nuclear disarmament in a comprehensive manner, in accordance with the provisions of the General Assembly's 1978 special session devoted to disarmament. The General Assembly's next special session on disarmament should allow the international community to review which of these provisions have been implemented and to present further recommendations in order to confront current challenges.

We attach great importance to the meetings that will be held as part of the year 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in order to implement the provisions of the Treaty and to meet the commitments entered into during the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty.

The Sudan participates in and supports all international and regional efforts aimed at imposing an embargo on anti-personnel landmines. In Ottawa last year we were one of the first States to sign the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. The fact that the Sudan has signed this Convention shows our strong conviction that peace and security must prevail, our feelings of international responsibility and our recognition of the human, social and economic tragedies caused by the use of landmines.

The Sudan is one of the African countries that suffers most from the dangers of landmines, which pose a serious threat to human beings as well as to the environment and natural resources. Landmines also prevent assistance from reaching individuals in need and are preventing more than 2 million displaced persons from returning to their homes.

In this respect, my delegation wishes to mention that, while me much appreciate the proposed programme of the United Nations Demining Unit to deal with landmines in Sudan, this programme still awaits financing. We hope that the donor community will assist us by providing the material and financial aid we need to deal with the landmine problem.

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The Sudan attaches special importance to the need to deal with the conventional weapons problem, especially in Africa, which is suffering from wars and from weapons that are finding their way to rebels. We need to put an end to the trafficking in conventional weapons, which is violating human rights and other basic principles and is destabilizing nations.

However, we feel that we have the right to use conventional weapons to defend our borders and national territory. This has been recognized by international law and in other international instruments.

We feel that the problem does not lie so much in the trafficking in arms itself as in the causes of the conflicts. Initiatives should take into account the specific nature of each region. We therefore appeal to other countries to meet their obligations and stop providing conventional weapons to rebels, allowing them to destabilize countries that wish to live securely and in peace.

The Sudan, like other members of the international community, believes that transparency in the area of weaponry is the primary way to consolidate peace and international security. The Sudan supports the position that the League of Arab States conveyed to the Secretary-General regarding the need for transparency in the weaponry and the current lack of transparency in United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. The Register should be expanded so as to contain data relating to weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons, as well as to the military uses of sophisticated technologies.

Moreover, the Register does not take into account the situation in the Middle East, where we find Israel still occupying Arab and Palestinian territories and possessing the most destructive weapons.

In fact, Israel is the only State in the region which is not a party to the NPT and which has not endorsed the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. Israel stubbornly rejects the appeals of the international community to accede to the Treaty and to subject its nuclear installations to International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards. If this situation persists, it could heighten tension in the region.

I draw the attention of delegations to an important event that occurred in my country. On 20 August 1998, the United States destroyed a pharmaceutical factory in Sudan on the pretext that it was producing substances that could be used to manufacture chemical weapons, a claim that was rejected by the entire world. This was a unilateral measure by the United States and had no basis in fact. At its 9th meeting, the First Committee heard the Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, who noted that the United States, which possesses the world's largest pharmaceutical companies, is not acting in conformity with article VI of the chemical weapons Convention by refusing to subject its industrial installations to inspection. This is what I would call a double-standard policy, a policy which we have denounced on a number of occasions.

But at a time when a pharmaceutical factory in a developing country is destroyed on a false pretext, we note that the mass media are reporting that Israel is transferring chemicals that are used to manufacture nerve gas. This was reported in *The New York Times* on 2 October 1998. Yet no one has reacted, even to verify these charges, despite the danger of the situation.

I wish in conclusion to reaffirm our determination to work with you, Mr. Chairman, to discuss all items on the agenda of the First Committee and to agree on acceptable draft resolutions.

**Mr. Kunda** (Zambia): At the outset, Sir, let me congratulate you on your unanimous election as Chairman of the First Committee this year. You bring to your office the great diplomatic skill and energy required to stir the Committee's work to a successful conclusion. I also congratulate the other members of the Bureau on their unanimous election to their respective posts.

By the same token, let me recognize the great and skilful leadership that your predecessor, Mr. Mothusi D.C. Nkgowe of Botswana, brought to this Committee during the fifty-second session of the General Assembly.

The total elimination of nuclear weapons from the face of the Earth is the bedrock of international peace and security. For non-nuclear-weapon States, the urgency of achieving a world without nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction is a real and demanding preoccupation. However, we note with regret that this sense of urgency is not fully shared by some nuclear-weapon States. At best, they pay lip service to complete or total nuclear disarmament, and at worst they want the retention of nuclear weapons for all time in the name of nuclear deterrence.

It is thus clear that nuclear weapons are the cornerstone of the foreign policies of nuclear-weapon States for the long haul. This means that, despite the celebrated demise of the most oppressive cold war, the cold-war paradigm is alive and well. In this continuing paradigm, security, anchored in nuclear weapons, is the continuing touchstone of national security considerations for the nuclear Powers. This phenomenon tends to belie the proclamations of nuclear-weapon States about their commitment to general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control. Indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is being translated into the indefinite retention of nuclear weapons. This is clearly borne out by the failure of the Conference on Disarmament to agree on the establishment of an ad hoc committee to negotiate nuclear disarmament.

In this regard, we are concerned by the reluctance of some nuclear Powers to negotiate nuclear disarmament in the multilateral setting of the Conference on Disarmament and by their opting instead for bilateral negotiations away from the global scrutiny that would be proper for a global issue. We totally disagree with this approach. It does not foster transparency; nor does it constitute a confidence-building measure.

We believe that nuclear weapons, as weapons of mass destruction, threaten all the peoples of the world. Once unleashed by choice, accident, miscalculation or sheer malfunction, they will not distinguish between combatant and non-combatant, friend or foe. Everyone and everything will fall victim to total annihilation by nuclear weapons. The international community, through the broad-based membership of the Conference on Disarmament, must therefore be involved in negotiations on a convention to ban nuclear weapons.

It is also our belief that, just as the whole host of other international instruments, such as the NPT, the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, were negotiated in the Conference on Disarmament as the single and sole negotiating body on disarmament-related issues, nuclear disarmament should likewise be negotiated in that body. It cannot be an exception to the rule.

Adherence to the sterile doctrines of the cold war has also been manifested in the rejection by some nuclear-weapon States of a 1996 time-bound disarmament framework proposed by the Group of 21 in the Conference on Disarmament as a programme of action for the elimination of nuclear weapons. That proposal represents a realistic approach which could serve as a useful guideline for future negotiations on the all-important, critical issue of nuclear disarmament. It was even made crystal clear that this proposal was flexible, meaning that nuclear-weapon States would introduce variations in it. It was not a programme to be imposed on nuclear-weapon States. Most important, it was not meant to be a straitjacket within which the programme of nuclear disarmament was to be carried out.

Happily, we have another attempt, announced on 9 June 1998 by the Group of Eight, whose delegations have already spoken about their initiative, entitled "Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: the need for a new agenda". Zambia supports this initiative designed to seek ways and means to rekindle the will of the international community for nuclear disarmament. To this end, my delegation will support the draft resolution which will be submitted in this Committee to define the new disarmament agenda in the unending quest to eradicate nuclear weapons for all time.

In our relentless search for total nuclear disarmament through a convention to ban nuclear weapons, we feel vindicated indeed by the historic advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice handed down on 8 July 1996 at The Hague, on the legality of the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. We all know very well that the Court in its opinion said that:

> "There exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control". *(A/51/218, annex, para. 105)*

This unanimous determination by the International Court of Justice was a landmark Advisory Opinion constituting a new frame of reference for all of the efforts of the international community in favour of nuclear disarmament. Although not binding, this high Advisory Opinion has been helpful in consolidating international public opinion. We urge nuclear-weapon States not to lose sight of that International Court of Justice landmark Advisory Opinion but to draw from it inspiration to negotiate nuclear disarmament in good faith.

The indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in 1995 and the conclusion of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) in 1996 meant that major hurdles had been overcome on the road to further and consolidated non-proliferation and eventually nuclear disarmament. There was therefore much talk about the next steps to be undertaken to maintain the momentum generated by the indefinite extension of the NPT and the conclusion of the CTBT.

The conclusion of a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) was, among others, seen as a natural course of action to maintain that momentum. It was this realization that informed the adoption of General Assembly resolution 48/75 L by consensus. That consensus resolution urged that negotiations go forward in the Conference on Disarmament on the fissile material cut-off treaty.

Zambia is happy that finally, after five years, agreement was reached in the Conference on Disarmament on 11 August 1998 to establish a new ad hoc committee on the fissile material cut-off treaty. We therefore expect this matter to be among the top priorities of the agenda of the Conference in January 1999. In this regard, might I say that my delegation is well aware that the treaty is going to be a very controversial subject. However, Zambia believes that for the FMCT to be meaningful, it should include all the fissile materials used to produce nuclear weapons, including those in existing stockpiles, in order to foster confidence and transparency. Failure to include existing stockpiles of weapons-grade fissile materials would create yet another loophole similar to that from which the CTBT suffers as a result of testing through technical means or computer simulation having been left out — a grave mistake of omission, not commission, at the time of the creation of the CTBT regime.

Another issue ripe for negotiations to build upon the NPT and the CTBT is that of security guarantees by nuclear-weapon States to assure non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, which would take the form of an international, legally binding instrument. Nuclear-weapon States undertook to negotiate security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon States at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference, but to date no such guarantees have been negotiated simply because of the lack of commitment, if not total disregard, on the part of some nuclear-weapon States to address this important issue on the international security agenda.

By foregoing the possession of nuclear weapons, non-nuclear- weapon States have made a huge and unparalleled contribution to international peace and security. They therefore deserve to be under the umbrella of an international arrangement assuring NPT non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. This must be enshrined in a legally binding instrument on negative security guarantees, negotiated multilaterally in the framework of the Conference on Disarmament. To this end, my delegation urges the Conference on Disarmament to re-establish the Ad Hoc Committee in early 1999 to negotiate an international instrument on negative security guarantees for non-nuclear-weapon States by nuclear-weapon States.

When the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty was adopted on 10 September 1996 by the resumed session of the fiftieth General Assembly, Zambia welcomed it as a historic achievement but decried the fact that it was not as comprehensive as it was meant to be. This concern, or might I say fear, was expressed not only by Zambia but by many non-aligned countries at the creation of the CTBT as the touchstone of the nuclear test ban. This fear is now being realized. My delegation is naturally perturbed by the fact that nuclear-weapon tests by alternative, high-technology means such as subcritical experiments, fusion research and superconductor simulations are being carried out by some nuclear-weapon States. This is obviously breaching the spirit of the CTBT.

All it takes is for one country to conduct a simulated nuclear-weapon test, and all other nuclear-weapon States will follow. This has become the rule of law among nuclear-weapon States. This is an ominous development, because we no longer have only five nuclear-weapon Powers. A reality check informs us that we have five plus two nuclear-weapon Powers, following the nuclear-weapon test explosions conducted by India and Pakistan last May. For all intents and purposes, South Asia is now a theatre of nuclear-weapon confrontation, and therefore yet another threat to international peace and security has come to the fore.

The emergence of South Asia as a nuclear-weapon theatre and the existence of other threshold nuclear-weapon States pose a demanding challenge to the major nuclear Powers, which should seriously strive to provide robust leadership to bring about a nuclear-weapon meltdown, with the eventual aim of banning nuclear weapons for all time.

Zambia has always been an ardent advocate of the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones. These zones play a major role in strengthening the fabric of the international regime of nuclear non-proliferation and towards realizing the overall objective of nuclear disarmament. It is a source of contentment that today the Antarctic Treaty, coupled with the treaties of Tlatelolco, Rarotonga, Bangkok and Pelindaba, have had the cumulative effect of freeing the entire Southern Hemisphere from the spectre of nuclear weapons. Surely these nuclear-weapon-free zones must have a demonstration effect and should even add impetus to the process of nuclear disarmament and to the strengthening of the non-proliferation regime.

The five nuclear-weapon-free zones have without a doubt imprinted upon the international public conscience the image of a globe over half of whose surface is already free from the scourge of nuclear weapons. More nuclear-weapon-free zones should be established.

The Middle East region has been yearning to become a nuclear-weapon-free zone for a long time. Such a zone in the Middle East must, like the existing ones, be established on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned. In order for the Middle East to become a nuclear-weapon-free zone, Israel must join the Non-Proliferation Treaty and place its nuclear facilities under the International Atomic Energy Agency system of safeguards.

We also support the countries of Central Asia in their quest to create a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia. By the same token, Zambia supports Mongolia in its quest for a single-country nuclear-weapon-free zone.

Twenty years have passed since the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD I) was held and 10 years since the third session (SSOD III). In the meantime, several momentous changes and events have taken place in the field of nuclear non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament. Members of the Non-Aligned Movement have long, in this Committee and elsewhere, been calling for SSOD IV at each and every session of the General Assembly. My delegation had hoped that the issue of convening SSOD IV would be resolved during the three years of focused attention given it by the Commission on Disarmament. This year was the third and final year of consideration by the Disarmament Commission of this important subject, but no agreement was reached on the holding of SSOD IV.

The time is now overdue for the convening of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament in order to review and assess thoroughly the implementation of the provisions of the Final Document of SSOD I, held in 1978. The continuing frustration at the issue of the convening of SSOD IV by some nuclear-weapon States belies their commitment to total nuclear disarmament, as set out in the programme embodied in the 1978 Final Document.

We urge all nuclear Powers to seize leadership in pursuing vigorously the implementation of General Assembly resolution 52/38 F, adopted by consensus, on the imperative need to convene the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament to map out a strategy for nuclear disarmament. Failure to map out a strategy on disarmament will mean that the twenty-first century will inherit all the problems of the twentieth century in the field of nuclear disarmament and will have to deal with an expanded club of nuclear-weapon States.

Under general and complete disarmament, the concern for conventional weapons remains as paramount as ever. Within the framework of conventional weapons, small arms and light weapons have taken conventional warfare to a new and unprecedented level altogether. The irony of small arms and light weapons is that the conflicts and suffering they spawn are neither small nor light. If anything, they are of titanic proportions, taking immeasurably heavy tolls, particularly on civilian populations. They therefore constitute an issue of legitimate concern for the international community.

While several countries in the world have borne the brunt of small arms and light weapons, the continent of Africa has been particularly abused by small arms and light weapons, as is evidenced by the widespread fratricidal wars and violence engendered by the use of small arms and light weapons as weapons of choice.

Zambia is also particularly alarmed and disturbed by the increasing participation of children in current conflicts, in which small arms and light weapons are the primary or sole instruments of conflict. Ten years ago, 200,000 children under the age of 16 were said to have taken part in conflicts in 25 countries. With the proliferation of protracted conflicts, with their increased intensity and severity, entire generations of children have, regrettably, been affected.

Zambia finds it totally unsettling and unacceptable that small arms and light weapons continue to bring death and untold suffering, particularly in vulnerable multi-ethnic societies with a deep-rooted history of tension among groups. There are also countries emerging from long and protracted fratricidal wars and confronted with the monumental task of reintegrating former combatants from uncivil into civil society. The destabilizing consequences of an excessive accumulation, proliferation, transfer and use of small arms and light weapons deserves urgent global attention. The call for an international conference on small arms and light weapons is therefore a timely international response to that menace.

With regard to anti-personnel landmines, Zambia welcomes the fact that the Convention, which was negotiated in Oslo and opened for signature in Ottawa last December, has had its fortieth ratification thanks to the Government of Burkina Faso, thus paving the way for the Convention's entry into force on 1 March 1999. In this regard, Zambia joins other delegations that have warmly welcomed the invitation of the Government of Mozambique to host the first meeting of the States parties in Maputo in May 1999. This is a reflection of Mozambique's commitment to the problem of eliminating landmines, which decimated that country and its people over many years.

The speed of the ratification process of the Convention on anti-personnel landmines has been remarkable. This is without doubt a manifestation of the strong international resolve to rid the world of the burden of mines and all the humanitarian problems that attend those silent but lethal weapons of choice. It is my delegation's hope that just as the ratification process was accelerated, so will be the international community's efforts to universalize the Convention. This is a challenge for the coalition of Governments, international organizations and institutions, non-governmental organizations and civil society at large that made the Convention possible. More — and harder — work lies ahead in terms of implementing the Convention upon its entry into force. Fortunately, there is a strong coalition, which sponsored the creation of the Convention and which is equal to the challenge of implementing the Convention.

**Mr. Koirala** (Nepal): Let me join other delegations in extending to you, Mr. Chairman, and to other members of the Bureau, our warm congratulations on your well-deserved election. It is our firm belief that under your able and skilled guidance the Committee's work will be successfully conducted. You can certainly rest assured of my delegation's cooperation in your task.

This year the First Committee is holding its deliberations against the background of some events that have left a deep impact on global disarmament initiatives. Reference can be made to a few of them, such as the imminent entry into force of the anti-personnel landmines treaty and the agreements reached at the Conference on Disarmament leading to the establishment of ad hoc committees to start negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty and on a legally binding instrument of security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States. Such favourable signs in the area of global disarmament notwithstanding, the overall scenario provides a gloomy picture, as evidenced by the lack of political will to agree on a time-bound elimination of nuclear weapons. As the Secretary-General appropriately remarked during his opening statement to the Committee,

> "It would be the height of folly to take it for granted that nuclear weapons are too terrible ever to be used and that States would keep them only as a deterrent." (*A/C.1/53/PV.3, p. 4*)

Nuclear weapons continue to pose a threat to the survival of mankind. The primary disarmament objective should be to rid the world of all nuclear weapons. The recent nuclear tests conducted in our region have reminded us that the international community cannot afford to remain complacent in the field of nuclear disarmament. These occurrences have provided reinforcement to our long-held commitment to accelerating the negotiations aimed at the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. The conclusion of a universal and legally binding nuclear weapons convention, committing all States parties to the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, is more urgent than ever.

We welcome the speedy ratifying process of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. The early operationalization of that treaty, however, should give momentum to international efforts for mine clearance. Assisting landmine victims and the development of technology for mine detection should remain a global concern. It also needs to be borne in mind that the Convention is no more than a prescription, the ultimate cure being the application of provisions in the actual field. In my delegation's view, the implementation of the treaty should be accorded priority by all States parties to the Convention.

The agreement reached at the Conference on Disarmament to start negotiations for concluding a fissile material cut-off treaty is a step in the right direction. Such a treaty, however, must take account of the existing stockpiles of weapons-grade fissionable materials. We are concerned that 2,000 metric tons of plutonium and highly enriched uranium in current stockpiles can be enough material for 100,000 nuclear warheads. The treaty's comprehensive aspect will be undermined if this factor is ignored.

Nepal has noted with deep appreciation the recent endeavours of the United Nations to accord priority to disarmament matters. The re-establishment of the Department for Disarmament Affairs, headed by Under-Secretary-General Jayantha Dhanapala underscores this point. Disarmament should remain at the heart of the United Nations efforts to secure and strengthen international peace and security.

The current sporadic conflicts that are killing innocent civilians is attributable to the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. In today's context, disarmament is necessary in both large and small arms. The horrific present acts of violence are being committed without recourse to sophisticated weapons. Small arms are increasingly used as a primary means of violence in internal conflicts and account for the greatest percentage of deaths and injuries in many armed conflicts. Because of the security, political and social implications involved in the ill-considered use of small and light weapons, we view with deep concern the rampant illegal trafficking in small arms and light weapons and their availability.

A few noteworthy steps have taken place in the field of curbing such arms flows. The moratorium established by the Economic Community of West African States on the trade and manufacture of small arms and the recent entry into force of the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Illegal Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and Other Related Materials are laudable. However, far more concerted efforts are required to stem the proliferation of small arms.

For achieving the goals of complete and general disarmament, the usefulness of creating universal awareness of the need for disarmament can never be underestimated. It is against this backdrop that the United Nations has been devoting resources to promote a world disarmament campaign. In this connection, mention may be made of the role of the United Nations Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament. As the host of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, my delegation welcomes the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Regional Centre. In his main report on the work of the Organization, the Secretary-General has pointed out the essential informational function of diplomacy that the Kathmandu Centre is carrying out by providing a valuable forum for meetings on regional security and confidence-building measures. My delegation urges Member States of the Asia-Pacific region to make greater use of the services of the Centre.

As at the fifty-second session of the General Assembly, my delegation, in consultation with other delegations, intends to submit a draft resolution on the Kathmandu Centre in this Committee at an appropriate time. I sincerely believe that this will enjoy the sponsorship and support of a large number of countries from both within and outside the region.

With the growing universality of a number of disarmament treaties that delegitimize the use of weapons of mass destruction such as chemical and biological weapons and anti-personnel landmines, there is no reason why the same cannot happen as regards nuclear weapons. What is needed is the strong political will of the international community to fulfil the treaty obligations to pursue negotiations in good faith for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons from the world.

**Mr. Abou-Hadid** (Syrian Arab Republic) (*interpretation from French*): It is a great pleasure for our delegation to see you, Mr. Chairman, presiding over our work. Your election is a testimony to your professional qualities and to your experience in the field of disarmament. Our congratulations go also to the other members of the Bureau.

*(spoke in English)*

My delegation is also greatly pleased to see Under-Secretary-General Dhanapala following our deliberations in person and to see all of the departmental and other Secretariat staff. They all deserve our sincere thanks.

*(spoke in Arabic)*

The First Committee is meeting amid increasing calls for the achievement of the comprehensive and complete elimination of all weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons. Allow me here to quote the statement made by my Minister for Foreign Affairs to the General Assembly:

> "Following the end of the cold war a decade ago, many, especially in the countries of the North, believed that this planet, which is home to approximately 6 billion people, was going to become a more stable, secure and prosperous world." *(A/53/PV.19, p. 10)*

Regrettably, these dreams have not come true. As my Minister for Foreign Affairs also said:

> "Nuclear weapons, which are unparalleled in their destructive capability, have proliferated since the end of the cold war and have now reached India and Pakistan. This proliferation has also gained a sort of legitimacy based on the fact that Israel's possession of nuclear weapons was not spoken of during the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. My country, Syria, Arab countries and most countries in the Non-Aligned Movement appealed to the five nuclear-weapon States during the review and extension conference for this Treaty not to exempt any country from adhering to this Treaty, so that the world will not face a new nuclear-arms race. Unfortunately that urgent call fell on deaf ears. Those who now assume that nuclear-arms proliferation will be limited to a few countries are mistaken. Syria and all Arab countries call for turning the Middle East into a nuclear-weapon-free zone, as a serious contribution to halting the nuclear-arms race." *(ibid., pp. 10-11)*

The recent series of test explosions in South Asia have created a new reality that must be dealt with, and an appropriate solution must be found by the international community. These tests have made it abundantly clear that the legal framework of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is incapable of providing the necessary and comprehensive guarantees for a world nuclear non-proliferation regime. The international community must deal with these loopholes — renouncing selectivity and double standards and upholding the universality of the Treaty — so as to arrive at a general and complete disarmament.

The recent events have been a cause of concern for us and for the whole world. In this regard, we must ask what their underlying causes are. For many decades India and Pakistan, and, indeed, the international community as a whole, have been calling upon the members of the nuclear club to work for the elimination of nuclear weapons, in accordance with their legal obligations under article VI of the NPT. But, as we said before, these calls fell on deaf ears.

This has led to a nuclear arms race which we believe will continue to escalate owing to the continued nuclear monopoly held by certain States and to the provision of nuclear capabilities for military purposes to some non-nuclear-weapon States on a variety of pretexts. At the same time, nuclear technology for peaceful purposes is denied to countries that need it to foster their development.

Those are the facts. We cannot follow the example of the ostrich and bury our heads in the sand.

This year's debate on disarmament and international security items is taking place against the backdrop of a number of developments in arms control and nuclear disarmament. These include the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), the indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the establishment of a number of nuclear-weapon-free zones and the affirmation by some States of their wish to establish such zones in various areas of Asia, and the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons.

Those developments, while important, must not give rise to excessive optimism that the lethal threat of nuclear weapons hovering over the future of mankind has been reduced, much less eliminated. We believe that the international situation dictates that we make greater efforts and display good will and serious political will to achieve the goal of the elimination of all weapons of mass destruction, first and foremost nuclear weapons.

The situation at the end of the twentieth century is cause for deep concern. The production, stockpiling, deployment and testing of nuclear weapons continue unabated. The nuclear warheads in the arsenals of nuclear-weapon States are a continued source of terror for all mankind. The nuclear-weapon States remain uncommitted to the elimination of these weapons, and continue to reject serious negotiations aimed at the total elimination of nuclear weapons. Some Powers continue to pursue policies of the use of force, interference in the internal affairs of other States, hegemony and the use of blockades and economic pressure against the peoples of developing countries.

All these challenges are an unquestionable source of concern for non-aligned countries, especially because they pose a grave threat to international peace and security — indeed, to the very existence of humanity. We believe that if these challenges are not addressed with due seriousness our credibility will be eroded, especially with regard to our determination to save our peoples from the scourge of war and to live in a world free of weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons, and in a world of peace and security.

In this connection, my country renews its support for the call by the non-aligned countries in the Conference on Disarmament for the establishment of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament as a priority step towards negotiations on a programme for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons within a time-bound framework, including the conclusion of an international convention for the elimination of nuclear weapons with the objective of the complete elimination of these weapons within a specified time-frame. Such a convention must also prohibit the development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, threat of use and use of such weapons, and must bring about the destruction of existing stockpiles. All States without exception must accede to such a convention. In that regard, we welcome the establishment of an ad hoc committee in the Conference on Disarmament to begin negotiations on a fissile materials cut-off treaty.

Syria strongly supports the proposal by the Non-Aligned Movement on convening a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament at the earliest possible date. We hope that this will take place before the beginning of the third millennium.

In the context of our efforts to achieve international security, and pending the elimination of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, non-nuclear-weapon States must be given security assurances against the use or threat of use of such weapons. These must be given in a legally binding instrument signed by the nuclear-weapon States. Unfortunately, what we have seen so far is no cause for optimism: the nuclear-weapon States continue to insist that unilateral declarations provide adequate assurances. In our view, they are thus by no means honouring their commitments in this regard. Syria strongly believes that the NPT will continue to fall short of achieving its objectives if all States without exception do not accede to it and demonstrate their commitment to it. Universality is necessary to give the NPT the credibility it needs to be successful and to reach its goals. This is true on both the international and the regional levels.

Here, my country welcomes Brazil's accession to the NPT; our congratulations go to that country. It is our hope that States which have not yet done so will follow the example of Brazil and will unconditionally join this instrument of international legality.

The successful establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones is a positive step towards a world free of weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons. My country supports and welcomes the existing zones, and supports the establishment of the new zones proposed by a number of States. Regrettably, however, the Middle East, despite its strategic importance, remains far from achieving this objective. This is because the one State in the region that has not yet acceded to the NPT — Israel — continues to refuse to sign the Treaty or to subject its nuclear facilities to international inspection, as all other States of the region have done with a view to joining together to make the Middle East a zone free of weapons of mass destruction.

At the 1989 Paris Conference, Syria launched an initiative, under the auspices of the United Nations, to make the Middle East a zone free from all weapons of mass destruction, whether nuclear, chemical or biological. Israel has not responded to these calls nor to those made by the United Nations, the Security Council, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), or the summit conferences of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

Israel's possession of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in our sensitive region will continue to be a source of concern and to pose a real threat not only to the peoples of the region but to international peace and stability.

We reaffirm once again the need for the international community to induce Israel to adhere to the NPT and to place all of its nuclear facilities and activities under the IAEA safeguards regime, in order for the Middle East region to be free from nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction, taking into account the fact that Israel's current position on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East and all of its justifications are diametrically opposed and clearly contradictory to its professed desire to establish peace in the region.

Genuine peace must be built on good faith and on restoring the rights of peoples, and not on the acquisition of nuclear weapons or the threat of their use, nor through the imposition of a policy of hegemony and military superiority.

Are those who do not acquire weapons required to give assurances to those who possess the largest nuclear arsenals? That makes no sense. All the States of the region save one have acceded to the NPT. That State stubbornly refuses to accede to the Treaty, in flagrant defiance of the will of the international community. It has an arsenal of hundreds of nuclear missiles, and it refuses to allow any inspections or international supervision. This leads us to another question: which is the rogue State? Which is the State that has violated international law and international legality? The danger is exacerbated because this one State, which has been exempted from a commitment to the NPT, continues to occupy parts of its neighbours' territories, in defiance of internationally binding resolutions. At the same time, it is manufacturing, developing and acquiring various kinds of sophisticated weapons, in particular weapons of mass destruction.

That State launches satellites and is proud of its ability to spy on the States of the region. It then sheds crocodile tears before the world, saying that its security is threatened, and asks for privileges at the expense of the security of its neighbours.

Syria believes that transparency in armaments is one way to promote international peace and security. We reaffirm our support for the Arab States' response to the Secretary-General that the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, in its current form, lacks transparency. It must be expanded to include, first of all, information about weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons, and on advanced technology with military applications, as well as detailed data on national military production. The choice of seven types of defensive weapons is unconvincing, discriminatory and confusing. In addition, it does not take into account the situation in the Middle East, which is characterized by a lack of qualitative balance in the field of armaments.

We in Syria are aware of our responsibility with respect to interregional and international peace and security, and we attach great importance to the achievement of a just and comprehensive peace in the region. It is our hope that in the near future this planet will be free from all forms of war and weapons of mass destruction, foremost among which are nuclear weapons, so that its peoples will be able peacefully to coexist and to work together for development, progress and prosperity.

Two days ago we heard a statement by Mr. José Bustani, Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). Despite the fact that we welcome his achievements and his attempts to universalize the Treaty in order to serve the cause of disarmament, regrettably we must say that some of the points he made in his statement do not fit with the current reality in the Middle East. He said that the peace process is on track and that the efforts under way will lead to the achievement of a comprehensive solution. But the whole world, and in particular the State that has taken the initiative and sponsored the peace process, is aware that the peace process faces a real crisis and that it has been at a standstill for over two years on the Lebanese and Syrian tracks while being eroded on the Palestinian track.

The intransigence of the current Israeli Government, its rejection of the principle of land for peace and its attempt to impose a peace based on occupation and settlement on its Arab neighbours; its Prime Minister's insistence on pursuing a policy antagonistic to peace and his rejection, under the pretext of ensuring Israel's security, of the Arabs' right to regain their occupied territories; and the fact that it possesses one of the largest and most sophisticated military arsenals in the world constitute a challenge not only to the Arab peoples but to the will of the international community as a whole.

The Director-General's statement portrayed Israel as a dove of peace that is seeking to comply with international instruments on disarmament. Here we have to ask ourselves which instruments and international treaties he is speaking of. The 1968 NPT Treaty has become near-universal, with the exception of a very small number of States. However, Israel continues to refuse to accede to it, under flimsy pretexts, and persists in its refusal to place its nuclear facilities under international supervision. We had hoped that the Director-General would speak about that in his statement, in view of the destructive capability of weapons of mass destruction and nuclear weapons in particular and of the grave consequences for humankind as a whole.

The appeal by the Director-General to some Arab States, including mine, to adhere to the Chemical Weapons Convention, which was concluded in 1993, and the failure to call on Israel to adhere to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), concluded in 1968, smacks of clear selectivity, which is neither objective nor acceptable.

All Arab States have adhered to the NPT, in response to the will of the international community. However, Israel continues to refuse to adhere to that Treaty. Those who possess nuclear weapons and have a nuclear arsenal do not care much about other weapons, including chemical weapons. Nevertheless, yesterday morning the Israeli representative declared that the decision by his Government to ratify the Chemical Weapons Convention is contingent upon adherence to it by some Arab States, totally disregarding Israel's refusal to adhere to the NPT at a time when all Arab States have adhered to it.

The statement made by the Israeli representative yesterday was full of contradictions. He portrayed Israel as a small country no more than 20 kilometres wide, surrounded by neighbours that are threatening its very existence. He continues to give us these fictitious stories and myths that no one any longer believes. The whole world is asking how it came to be that Israel was established, why it is continuing its occupation of the Arab territories, why it has brought the peace process to a halt and why it is arming itself to the teeth with various forms of weapons of mass destruction and conventional weapons, thereby disrupting the strategic balance in the region, threatening Arab national security and disregarding the Arab desire to establish a just and comprehensive peace.

Small States must seek to ensure their security and the security of others through the path of a comprehensive and just peace, not through expansion and the acquisition of nuclear capabilities to threaten their neighbours and occupy their territories.

**Mr. Volski** (Georgia): Allow me to join other delegations in greeting you, Mr. Chairman, and other members of the Bureau and also to extend my delegation's best wishes for every success in your responsible work.

It has not been long since we established the tradition of emphasizing an event of global scale and significance: the ending of the cold war and the global stand-off, when international tension no longer threatened coming generations with Armageddon and extermination.

In recent years we have seen significant progress in the field of disarmament in terms of reaching international agreements and taking practical measures. Important efforts have been undertaken with respect to enlarging the geographical area of nuclear-weapon-free zones.

We believe that, despite the sometimes radically different approaches of States to certain issues, we should find a common position, since we have to face a common objective: to eliminate the threat to international peace and stability — more broadly, to avert the threat of the extermination of mankind.

Georgia has considerable economic resources for the development of its statehood and for the well-being of its population. Georgia's geo-strategic situation attracts various kinds of interest from within and without.

Together with its intellectual potential and resources, Georgia's future prosperity is in many ways linked with the implementation of global economic projects that will build a bridge between Asia and Europe by providing highways of transportation and energy resources. Today, the well-known Transport Corridor: Europe-Caucasus-Asia (TRACECA) project and that of the historic Silk Road are no longer just concepts but working mechanisms. It is understandable that regional and global stability is of the utmost importance for Georgia.

The organic link between disarmament and, respectively, the easing of tension and development has already become tangible for us. Unfortunately, under present circumstances we face the problem of aggressive separatism, which has created a significant source of tension in the region of Abkhazia in western Georgia.

The separatist regime which has succeeded in gaining temporary control over that area has no future; but it should be viewed as proof of the urgency of the matter raised in this Committee by the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, as we are facing an attempt to cause the violent disintegration of a State.

The problem of anti-personnel landmines is extremely important from both a moral and a practical standpoint. Georgia's accession to the landmines Convention is a most urgent matter and is planned for the imminent future. But the complexity of the situation is also understandable: it is impossible to fully meet the provisions of the Convention at a time when, due to separatist or other ambitions, part of the territory of the country is practically uncontrolled.

Neither can we speak about the comprehensive transparency of armaments under those circumstances. There is no practical mechanism that could control the influx of conventional arms in those territories or monitor illegal trafficking and reveal information about the existing stockpiles of armaments.

When compounded by lawlessness, the problem of trafficking radioactive, chemical and biological materials becomes all the more urgent and worrisome. When speaking about the tensions existing in the Caucasus region, we have the following picture: on one side of the scale there is the close cooperation of States with a view to implementing global economic projects and ensuring sustainable development, and on the other side there are adventurous ambitions linked with the interests of certain political revanchist or criminal groups.

We believe that those problems give us an opportunity to pinpoint concrete items for the agenda of the special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

Georgia welcomes and supports joint efforts aimed at lasting peace through taking practical measures in the field of disarmament. We hope that the meetings of the relevant working group will assume an intensive character. We believe that during the meetings of the group we will have the opportunity to discuss the creation of effective measures for resolving the problem of landmines, which is connected with means of assistance on the part of organizations and countries involved in the settlement of the conflict in Abkhazia, Georgia.

We will also have the opportunity to discuss the improvement of transparency in information about disarmament under conditions of ethnic political conflicts.

Georgia, like other nations of goodwill, is gravely concerned at the threat of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Our position is unequivocal with regard to the recently conducted nuclear tests. This question has been widely discussed. We hope that the number of the signatories of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) will be increased by two in the near future.

And yet, we cannot but stress that the efforts aimed at curbing the proliferation of nuclear weapons do not live up to present demands. We believe that more attention should be paid to the analysis of the preconditions for the propensity to develop nuclear armaments.

More efforts should be made to eliminate such preconditions. It is important to note that in the view of certain States their security is guaranteed not by the reinforcement of their destructive power, but by cooperation. Those States that are capable of this should emerge as active catalysts for bilateral and multilateral negotiations.

We attach great importance to the creation of security mechanisms for non-nuclear-weapon States. It is unfortunate that consensus on this matter has not been reached. We hope that the Ad Hoc Committee set up by the Conference on Disarmament will actively work to overcome existing obstacles.

It is also very urgent that in the elaboration and implementation of agreements on disarmament environmental problems be dealt with. We deeply hope that the ideals of preserving the environment for posterity will ultimately prevail and that the parties will do their best to present the world with a resolution adopted by acclamation.

Georgia, like many other nations, welcomes the re-establishment of the Department for Disarmament Affairs and believes that it was an important step for strengthening the Organization in the field of disarmament. We view this structure as a main think-tank for the analysis of problems in various parts of the world. It should be given the capacity to mobilize United Nations resources and effectively direct them towards the task of peace and development.

The initiatives of the Secretary-General with a view to updating, revitalizing and streamlining the work of the First Committee and of the Disarmament Commission require support and our backing.

**Mr. Zackheos** (Cyprus): I would like at the outset to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, and the other members of the Bureau on your well-deserved election. I have no doubt that with your long experience and wise guidance the goals of our Committee will be fully achieved. I wish to assure you of the Cyprus delegation's full support for your important task.

The last decade witnessed the demise of the cold-war era and the complete rewriting of the disarmament and arms-control agenda. During this period we have seen such major achievements as the signing of the Chemical Weapons Convention and its entry into force in April last year; the indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which is the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime; the strengthening of the process for reviewing the NPT; the conclusion of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty; and the signing of the Convention aimed at the total, worldwide elimination of anti-personnel landmines.

Cyprus supports all efforts aimed at the strengthening of the international non-proliferation regime through universal adherence to the existing legally binding international instruments and the development of effective verification mechanisms; through unilateral actions taken by nuclear-weapon States to reduce their nuclear arsenals; through the surveillance and, by use of the appropriate export-control mechanisms, the control of exports of sensitive materials, equipment and technologies; through regional arrangements freely entered into by the States concerned; as well as through other interim measures, such as the introduction of moratoriums and the signing of confidence-building agreements.

We also join all previous speakers who have addressed the need to promote the implementation of the objectives set down in the Non-Proliferation Treaty and to secure that Treaty's universality. Cyprus is firmly committed to the successful outcome of the year 2000 NPT Review

Conference and fully shares the objectives of the European Union towards this end.

We would also like to add our voice to that of those members that have underlined the significance of the fact that 150 countries have signed the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and have urged its early entry into force. In this respect, we welcome the expressed intention of India and Pakistan to sign the agreement.

We welcome the recent decision of the Conference on Disarmament to establish an Ad Hoc Committee to start negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty and a second Ad Hoc Committee to consider further steps to ensure non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT against the use or the threat of use of nuclear weapons.

Another important development was the entry into force last April of the Chemical Weapons Convention. Cyprus became party to the Chemical Weapons Convention in August after adopting all the necessary internal legislation and after setting up the required machinery for its implementation. Also, Cyprus has officially applied to join the Australia Group and the Nuclear Suppliers Group. Equally important is the adoption of a legally binding protocol establishing a strengthened verification and compliance regime for the Convention on Bacteriological and Toxin Weapons at the earliest possible date.

We recognize that much more needs to be done in the field of conventional weapons; however, we are much encouraged by the overwhelming response of the international community regarding the total elimination of anti-personnel landmines. I wish to reiterate in this respect that, despite the continuing foreign occupation of almost 40 per cent of the territory of the Republic of Cyprus, we decided to sign the relevant Convention as an expression of our determination to join the international community in its efforts to eliminate this totally inhumane method of warfare. In this respect, I would like to note also our efforts and agreement regarding the demining of the ceasefire line in Cyprus, as well as the assistance offered by the Government of Canada.

We are also encouraged by the attention given to the prevention and the combating of illicit arms-trafficking. Cyprus has aligned itself with all measures being pursued by the European Union and others to halt the illicit and covert trafficking of small arms through tighter controls and closer cooperation and coordination.

We fully share the view expressed by many preceding speakers Committee that arms control and disarmament are an essential component of international peace and security. Although the reduction of forces and armaments alone cannot provide for or guarantee international security, it can reduce the risk of an outbreak of a military conflict, and it can contribute to confidence-building and conflict resolution.

In this context, I would like to recall once more the proposal made by the President of the Republic of Cyprus for the demilitarization of the Republic of Cyprus, a proposal that we consider a genuine offer for peace on the island and in the region at large. During his address to the plenary of this year's session of the General Assembly, President Clerides suggested, in response to Security Council resolutions, concrete ways and means to begin work on a specific programme to reduce foreign and local forces and equipment, as a necessary preparatory step for the final withdrawal of all foreign forces and elements from the island and its demilitarization, as stipulated in the relevant United Nations resolutions.

The demilitarization proposal included the gradual disbanding of the National Guard of Cyprus, the handing over of all arms and military equipment to an international force and the deposit of all monies saved in United Nations accounts in exchange for the phased, complete withdrawal of all foreign troops and the Turkish Cypriot armed forces, as demanded by the relevant United Nations resolutions.

As the President of Cyprus stated, these proposals and suggestions are still valid and timely, and as such they remain on the negotiating table, for we remain committed to seeking a solution to the Cyprus problem by peaceful means. We will continue to exert every effort towards that end.

I should like finally to bring to the attention of the Committee a matter of great concern to the Government and the people of Cyprus. It regards the decision of the Turkish Government to build a nuclear power plant in a highly seismic area in southeastern Turkey, which, apart from the obvious environmental consequences, poses, we believe, a potential risk to international peace and security. According to reports by several international non-governmental organizations, including Greenpeace, the proposed site of Turkey's first nuclear power plant, Akkuyu Bay, situated next to the Ecemis fault line, a highly seismic area, greatly increases the risk of a catastrophic accident that could spread radioactive contamination over Turkey, Cyprus and the Middle East. Such an accident would cause enormous economic and environmental damage and social dislocation, and would have a grave impact on the health of surrounding populations. As the relevant report prepared by Greenpeace states, at a time when no new reactors are being ordered in Western Europe and North America, and while the nuclear industry has advanced to such a level as to claim that such accidents are unlikely, major accidents have happened at nuclear power stations, and they continue to happen.

Since the Republic of Cyprus became a Member of the United Nations in 1960, we have been fully committed to the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter, an integral part of which is the maintenance of international peace and security. We have consistently maintained that genuine and lasting peace can be achieved only through the implementation of an effective international security system as provided for in the Charter. During the last decade the international community has made great strides towards the realization of that lofty goal. We have a duty to future generations to approach the new millennium with the same resolve and determination.

**The Chairman** (*interpretation from French*): The First Committee has thus concluded its general debate.

I call now on representatives who wish to make statements in exercise of the right of reply.

**Mr. Kim Sam Jong** (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Yesterday the representative of South Korea made comparatively long remarks concerning the Korean peninsula, on disarmament, security and reunification. He spoke as though they were interested in solving the problems of peace and security, disarmament and reunification on the Korean peninsula. That is utterly deceptive and ridiculous, simply because their loud talk about peace, security and disarmament belies their true intention: to achieve the confrontational goal they set forth during the cold-war era.

The path forward is clear. In order to end the politically confrontational relations on the Korean peninsula, the North and the South should move forward towards confederational reunification based on North-South mutual coexistence and the implementation by neighbouring countries of impartial policies without instigating North-South confrontation. But South Korea's action is negative. They oppose reunification on the basis of North-South coexistence and try to cover up their real attempts to reunify on the basis of their own system. Moreover, they travel to the United States and to Japan begging for collaboration and cooperation with the South only, aimed at restraining the North. Their true intention is obviously to win a confrontation with the North. Accordingly, their crying about reunification, coexistence and sunshine policies is not even worth consideration.

On military aspects, two questions should be resolved: the destruction of the confrontational structure on the one hand, and resolving disarmament and regional security matters on the other. To dismantle the confrontational structure, a peace agreement between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States should be concluded, since there has already been a North-South non-aggression agreement. Simultaneously, the other disarmament and regional security matters must be resolved. Moreover, the South Koreans are ignoring the very reality with which the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States are confronted militarily, and they oppose the conclusion of a peace agreement between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States, while participating with the United States and Japan in the three-way military alliance against the North. But while turning away from these fundamental matters, they claim that disarmament and regional security matters should be resolved first.

In these facts we can see clearly their true intentions. What they want is to disarm the North step by step, through the so-called resolution of disarmament and regional security matters, in order to achieve their ultimate goal of confrontation. Although they talk about four-way talks, how can we expect good progress in such talks so long as they maintain wrong intentions in their hearts?

All these facts show that the South Koreans do not wish to dismantle the confrontational structure through mutual compromise, but wish rather to achieve the ultimate goal of the cold-war era with political and military support from outside. The international community should recognize the realities of the Korean peninsula, where the South Koreans are not discarding the confrontational aim of the cold-war era — that is, reunification on the basis of their own system. The main purpose of their crying about disarmament, reduction of tension, reconciliation and cooperation is nothing other than to disarm the North and to achieve their confrontational goal.

**Mr. Aliyev** (Azerbaijan): I would like to speak in exercise of my right of reply in order not to allow this body to be misled by allegations made yesterday by the representative of Armenia. Azerbaijan was forcibly drawn into a full-scale war with Armenia, in which a wide range of weapons has been used. A substantial part of the military arsenal employed consists of weapons and military technology limited by the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe — the CFE Treaty. At present, Armenia controls 20 per cent of the territory of my country. At the beginning of 1997 Armenia had 253 battle tanks, 278 armoured vehicles and 298 artillery units stationed in the occupied territory. Clearly, Armenia's treaty-limited equipment stationed in part of Azerbaijan's territory already exceeds the maximum levels for holdings set for the whole of Azerbaijan.

Under the fourth preambular paragraph of CFE Treaty, the States parties have an obligation

> "to refrain in their mutual relations, as well as in their international relations in general, from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State, or in any other manner inconsistent with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations".

The Treaty has been violated by one State party — Armenia — which has used force against the territorial integrity of another State party to the Treaty — Azerbaijan. Given this violation, Azerbaijan could, with perfectly legal justification, consider itself to be released from its Treaty obligations. Despite our difficulties, however, Azerbaijan is continuing to fulfil those obligations. No other State party to the Treaty has implemented it in conditions of war and with a fifth of its territory occupied by the armed forces of an adversary. Even at the height of the military confrontation, we have never refused to accept inspections by other States.

Azerbaijan fully supports the idea of the Ottawa Convention. A total ban on anti-personnel landmines has both security and humanitarian dimensions. It goes without saying that the indiscriminate use of anti-personnel landmines causes human suffering and casualties and also, to a certain extent, adversely affects economic development and reconstruction. Therefore Azerbaijan strongly supports the goal of ending the human tragedy they cause.

I am pleased to inform the Committee that a national demining agency was established recently. However, the present security situation in our region in the absence of pertinent alternatives continues to preclude my country's joining in a total ban on anti-personnel landmines at the current stage. As is known, the Ottawa Convention strictly prohibits the use of anti-personnel landmines and demands their destruction, and it does not provide for any reservations or exceptions. A State party to the Convention that has undergone external offence and needs to exercise its right of self-defence, protecting its territory with the use of, *inter alia*, anti-personnel landmines, becomes the violator.

The Republic of Armenia continues its aggression against my country, occupying 20 per cent of Azerbaijan's territory and making wide use of anti-personnel landmines and anti-tank mines there. Moreover, the threat of the resumption of hostilities still exists. The illegal acquisition by Armenia of $1 billion of offensive weaponry disproportionate to its needs and regular military exercises with another country, designed to increase the offensive potential of the Armenian armed forces, is dangerous proof of that.

In a wider context, such Armenian political and military conduct not only prevents the settlement of the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan but also has a direct destabilizing impact on the whole situation in the region. Therefore, unlike Armenia, whose territory was never invaded or occupied, Azerbaijan is forced to apply appropriate measures, including the use of mines, as a deterrent.

**Ms. Aghadjanian** (Armenia): I should like to refer to the statement just made by my Azerbaijani colleague in exercise of the right of reply.

The allegations regarding a so-called war between Armenia and Azerbaijan or Armenia's armed aggression against Azerbaijan are totally misleading. The conflict in question is one between the people of Nagorny-Karabakh and the Government of Azerbaijan, which refuses to address the demands of the people of Nagorny-Karabakh to exercise their right to self-determination.

The fighting in Nagorny-Karabakh is not the result of armed aggression but self-defence on the part of the local Armenian population, their only means of avoiding mass deportation and genocide. Hence Armenia and its armed forces can bear no responsibility for the territories that are currently controlled by the armed forces of Nagorny-Karabakh and whatever military equipment may be stationed there, and it would be desirable if in his future statements my colleague would use more precise names and references.

On the point of violations of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE), after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the conventional arsenal of the Soviet Union was divided among the States parties members of the Commonwealth of Independent States. The division of the former Soviet Union's arms was conducted on the basis of two legally binding documents, to which both Armenia and Azerbaijan are parties. The CFE Treaty and the Tashkent Agreement on the principles and procedures of CFE implementation stipulate that those States should have an equal amount of military equipment in all five categories as defined by the Treaty. Armenia has been in compliance with its CFE Treaty obligations and does not exceed the aforementioned limitations in all five categories.

Inspections of Armenia's armed forces provided for by Treaty protocols have not revealed any violations of quantitative limitations. The 1997 arms control and disarmament agency report also states that Armenia complies with its limitations. On the contrary, as is revealed by the annual exchange of data under the CFE Treaty, Azerbaijan continues to violate CFE provisions by seriously exceeding the limitations in three Treaty-limited equipment categories. Azerbaijan's disregard of the CFE Treaty provisions threatens the brittle peace in the region. Moreover, Azerbaijan's possession of a large arsenal of conventional weapons casts doubt on its intentions to settle the Nagorny-Karabakh conflict by peaceful means.

Armenia welcomes the fortieth ratification of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. However, to assume legally binding obligations we expect clearly observed readiness and reciprocity from our neighbours in the region. We are concerned at Azerbaijan's reluctance to accede to the ban. The existence of a large number of landmines along our borders with Azerbaijan is a great source of concern, and that must be addressed. Armenia's full participation in the Convention is contingent upon a similar level of political commitment by other States in the region to assume their obligations under the Convention.

With regard to the issue of the so-called arms transfers, I should like to state that a Trilateral Inter-Governmental Commission consisting of Russian, Azerbaijani and Armenian representatives has been established to deal with conventional arms transfers to Armenia and Azerbaijan. The Commission, established at the initiative of Azerbaijan, is still considering the issue of arms transfers and has not arrived at any conclusions. Ostensibly, Azerbaijan claims to be interested in the settlement of the issue. However, Azerbaijan's repeated raising of the issue in other forums before the Commission comes to any conclusion can be construed as an attempt to distract the international community's attention from its flagrant violations of the CFE Treaty.

This is not the first time that a representative of Azerbaijan, at different levels, has used the so-called Armenian aggression or occupation to justify whatever economic, social, political or other problems they might have. Today's statement in the exercise of the right of reply is just another example of this notorious practice.

**Mr. Sobel** (Israel): I should like to speak in exercise of the right of reply in responding to the statement by the Syrian delegation.

The representative of Syria seemed to dismiss lightly the threat to Israel which we pointed out, and he made fun of Israel's small size, but frankly Syria's record on the peace process and arms control does not give us a great deal of encouragement.

Looking at some of the Syrian record, I see that Syria opposed the Camp David process; Syria then proceeded to oppose the Peace Treaty with Egypt; Syria then continued to oppose the Treaty of Peace with Jordan; Syria then opposed the Oslo peace talks with the PLO; it then continued to oppose the talks with the Palestinians. It continues today to object to and oppose the present, ongoing Wye Plantation talks. None of that points to a very encouraging Syrian attitude to the peace process in the Middle East. Furthermore, Syria has supported international terrorism. And we all recall the involvement of the Syrian Embassy in London in planting a bomb on an El Al civilian aeroplane.

Syria continues to occupy parts of Lebanon. Syria is one of the few States in the world which has poison gas in its standing military arsenal — again, not a very encouraging prospect for us in Israel. Furthermore, they have equipped ballistic missiles with poison-gas warheads that are stationed today in Syria and directed against Israel. Frankly, it does not give us a very warm feeling or encourage us.

Given that record, I find that the Syrian diatribe has a fairly hollow sound to it. The solution — the crux — remains that States, including Syria, must make peace with Israel, have normal relations and discuss and negotiate arms control directly with us. But it cannot work both ways. They cannot refuse to recognize Israel and call for its destruction yet at the same time call upon Israel to take unilateral steps. The key is direct negotiations: make peace with us and live in peace with us, and then negotiate issues, including arms control.

**Mr. Esenli** (Turkey): The Turkish delegation has always made a conscious effort to spare this Committee regional problems so that the lofty goals of the disarmament agenda can be best addressed. However, my delegation is compelled to take the floor to speak against the allegations made by one of the previous speakers on the Cyprus issue.

It is very ironic to hear calls for demilitarization and the reduction of tension on the island and in the region at a time — to be more precise, on a day — when the Greek Cypriot National Guard units, together with an armada of army, navy and air force units belonging to Greece, are staging provocative military manoeuvres in and around southern Cyprus. It is reported that F-16 and A-7 warplanes from Greece will be deployed at a military airbase in southern Cyprus. In the context of the joint military doctrine between Greece and the Greek Cypriot Administration, this continuing provocation and the planned deployment of the sophisticated S-300 missiles in southern Cyprus constitute the underlying causes of tension in Cyprus.

In the context of those policies of enmity, the representative who spoke earlier also tried to exploit the question of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Turkey, which adheres to all the international instruments in the field of nuclear non-proliferation, does not need to be reminded of its responsibilities.

I do not want to go into details. The unfounded claims made here today will be duly replied to by the representative of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, and that reply will distributed as a document of the General Assembly and the Security Council.

**Mr. Cho** (Republic of Korea): I wish to respond to the comment made by our colleague from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in his exercise of the right of reply. Frankly, we are a little bit disappointed, because we did not hear any new element from him, simply the repetition of what the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea had already mentioned during the general debate. I do not think that my delegation should repeat the details of our position; I do not think that that would be in the interests of this Committee. We believe that we have had ample opportunity to explain our position, and we believe that that position has been well understood by the members of this Committee.

But let me just add one important point: the task of achieving peace on the Korean peninsula is not an easy one. As we know, we need patience and tolerance. Indeed, reconciliation and the restoration of mutual trust between the two parties would bring both of us nearer to the eventual goal of peace and the unification of the Korean peninsula.

In that regard, I wish to underline again that our "Sunshine Policy" is intended not to perpetuate confrontation, but to put an end to the confrontation of the old era, to open a new era of genuine peace and cooperation on the Korean peninsula.

**Mr. Abou-Hadid** (Syrian Arab Republic) (*interpretation from Arabic*): I do not wish to prolong this meeting, but the representative of Israel chose to refer to Syria's record. I would like to recall that in his statement yesterday he said,

(*spoke in English*)

> "Israel's record is impressive, and we intend to continue to play our part in the arms control effort of the family of nations." (*A/C.1/53/PV.10*)

(*spoke in Arabic*)

Indeed, Israel has an impressive record of defying international law, defying the United Nations and even defying international humanitarian law.

The meeting of the States parties to the 1949 Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War — to be held in Geneva next month in response to the almost unanimous proposal of the General Assembly — provides but one example of that impressive record. I regret to have to remind representatives that yesterday the representative of Israel did not answer the direct questions posed to him in response to his statement regarding the concerns of some States in the region in connection with the Chemical Weapons Convention. We wonder what Israel's justifications are.

Secondly, he did not say anything about the attempt to assassinate Khaled Meshal with chemical agents by Mossad members using counterfeit Canadian passports. Nor did he offer Israel's explanation of the 1992 crash in the Netherlands of an El Al airliner carrying chemical agents. He did not say anything about the disappearance of 30 tons of these agents.

I believe that representatives have read what was published recently in *Jeune Afrique* magazine, in Paris, regarding Israel's manufacture of biological and chemical weapons. That article stated that diplomats and experts in the field of armaments have revealed the existence of a large factory in Israel devoted to the manufacture of chemical and biological weapons. The factory was established in 1952 near Tel Aviv. The magazine quoted those diplomats and experts as saying that the Israeli factory — the facilities of which take up a number of hectares and are strictly guarded — operates under the name "Biological Research Institute". It is located in a suburb of Tel Aviv, but is not included in any aerial map of the region.

The magazine went on to say that the El Al airliner that crashed near Amsterdam in 1992 was carrying 190 litres of chemical agent to that Israeli factory, an extremely poisonous gas similar to that which was used by the Aum Shinrikyo sect in Japan in the terrorist acts committed in the Tokyo subway in 1995. The Israeli authorities have finally acknowledged the El Al incident and have said that the plane was carrying chemical agents that can become poisonous if other materials are added to them. But the magazine went on to say that this Israeli version is inaccurate, because a study shows that 700 people of the neighbourhood in which the plane crashed continue to suffer from many illnesses as a result of the leakage of chemical agents from the plane.

The article pointed out that Israel continues to deny the existence of its chemical weapons programme, but that Israel has prepared F-16 planes to transport the chemical agents made in its factory and that the El Al plane was carrying chemical agents from an American company to that factory.

The Israeli representative is well aware that the peace process could not have started without Syria's help. Syria responded to the initiative of the sponsors, the United States and Russia, on the grounds that this process must be based on the resolutions of international legality, Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and, as far as Lebanon is concerned, resolution 425 (1978).

The halt in the peace process is due to the position of the current Israeli Prime Minister, his refusal to accept the principle of land for peace, his rejection of withdrawal and his refusal to resume the negotiations from the point where they were suspended, on all tracks. What is taking place now at the Wye Plantation proves to all that the current Prime Minister is far removed from any faith in the achievement of a just and comprehensive peace. On the contrary, he is trying to kill the process, as he promised his voters he would do in his election campaign.

Let us set the record straight by not accepting lies and obfuscations from Israel.

**Mr. Zackheos** (Cyprus): The Turkish representative seems to be allergic to the name of the Republic of Cyprus and the legitimate and internationally recognized Government of Cyprus. He prefers to refer to a secessionist entity which is the result of Turkey's invasion and occupation of Cyprus, which was declared illegal by the Security Council and has been recognized only by Turkey.

The Turkish representative does not explain why he does not support the proposal of the President of Cyprus for the demilitarization of the island, which would bring peace and stability to Cyprus and the region and offer full security to the Turkish Cypriots. It is apparent that Turkey does not wish to discuss this issue because of its expansionist aims and because it wants to keep Cyprus perpetually hostage to its military superiority.

The Turkish representative also referred to the decision of the Cyprus Government to enhance its defensive capability and to the National Guard's yearly exercises. I would like to remind everyone that the enhancement of the defensive capabilities of the National Guard is an expression of the right to self-defence recognized in the Charter of the United Nations. This is especially true in the case of Cyprus, where the long-standing illegal occupation of the northern part of the Republic of Cyprus by approximately 36,000 Turkish troops makes this even more relevant. I would like to point out that the tension on the island is caused only by the strong and threatening presence of the Turkish occupying forces, which are in an attack formation and which have the capability to get early reinforcements from Turkey.

Our experience with the Turkish bombardments against innocent civilians in 1964 and 1974 fully justifies our concern for the security of our people. It is clear and undeniable that the Turkish threat and actions, both in 1964 and in 1974, were in violation of the United Nations Charter, in particular of Article 2, paragraph 4.

Turkey is always ready to threaten to take military measures against Cyprus or, for that matter, against others of its neighbours.

We have not, however, seen even the slightest effort on its part to reduce tension or to support a return to the negotiating table in order to find a lasting solution, based on principle, to the Cyprus problem. The Government of Cyprus, for its part, has given ample proof of its desire to find a peaceful solution to the Cyprus problem that would provide security and prosperity to both communities on the island. I call upon Turkey to come to the negotiating table and discuss questions of the reduction of tension on the island; I assure them that they will find eager partners on our part.

On the question of Greek participation in the exercises in Cyprus, I note that this is done at the request of and with the approval of the Government of the Republic of Cyprus.

**Mr. Sobel** (Israel): I listened attentively to the reply by the representative of Syria. I failed, however, to hear his reaction to the point that I made. The point that I made was that Syria has poison gas in its military arsenal; that it has equipped ballistic missiles with poison-gas warheads; that Israel is within the range of those missiles; that those missiles are aimed at Israel; and that Israel, frankly, has something to fear.

**Mr. Kim Sam Jong** (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Over the past two weeks, when my delegation and the delegation of South Korea have expressed different positions, I came to the conclusion that talking with the South Koreans is useless because they are controlled by outside forces, even in policy-making areas. For instance, the withdrawal of United States troops is a fundamental matter; in this respect they have no power. The root cause of the confrontation is the intervention of outside forces. If there had been no outside intervention, there would not have been a division between the North and the South, and Korea would have been reunified.

South Korea has neglected the many root causes of the conflict and has begged for the permanent stationing of United States troops in South Korea. South Korea should pursue an independent policy and ask for the withdrawal of the United States troops. Withdrawal of the United States troops from South Korea would lead to the establishment of favourable conditions for peace, disarmament and reunification.

Therefore, I would prefer to talk with the real bosses from now on.

**Mr. Abou-Hadid** (Syrian Arab Republic) (*interpretation from Arabic*): People who live in glass houses should not throw stones. Since, as we know, Israel possesses 200 nuclear weapons, since it possesses nuclear reactors not subject to international inspection, since it possesses chemical and biological laboratories and factories, since it continues to occupy the territories of others and since it is determined to perpetuate that occupation, I do not believe it is entitled to question other States. Under the Charter, States have a legitimate right to self-defence.

Our region does not need strategic alliances; rather it needs a just and comprehensive peace based on legally binding international resolutions. This means complete Israeli withdrawal from the forcibly occupied Syrian Golan to the lines of 4 June 1967 and from southern Lebanon and the western Bekaa in conformity with the relevant resolutions of the Security Council and the principle of land for peace. With regard to negotiations on the Palestinian track, we support the realization of the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, including its rights of self-determination and to the establishment of an independent State of its own on its national soil.

As members know, the peace process is facing a real crisis; it has come to a complete halt on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks because of the election of the current Israeli Prime Minister. But Syria remains committed to peace as a strategic choice; this requires the resumption of negotiations. We have consistently affirmed our readiness to resume those negotiations from the point at which they left off on both the Syrian and the Lebanese tracks, and to continue to build on previous commitments and undertakings with a view to establishing a just and comprehensive peace in our region.

We have yet to hear from the representative of Israel any convincing answer to these arguments, which are in keeping with international legality.

**The Chairman** (*interpretation from French*): Before calling on the representative of the Republic of Korea, I call on the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on a point of order.

**Mr. Kim Sam Jong** (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Yesterday, the South Korean representative exercised his right of reply in relation to our main speech last Friday. Today he spoke a second time in exercise of his right of reply, and it is my belief that in accordance with the Committee's procedures the South Korean representative should not be given another opportunity to speak in exercise of the right of reply. If it is given to him, then we too have the legitimate right to exercise the right of reply.

**The Chairman** (*interpretation from French*): I remind the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea that each delegation has the right to speak in exercise of the right of reply twice per meeting. The representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has already spoken twice this morning in exercise of the right of reply, and the representative of the Republic of Korea has spoken once. After the latter representative has made his second statement in exercise of the right of reply, neither he nor the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will have another opportunity to speak in exercise of the right of reply at this meeting.

**Mr. Cho** (Republic of Korea): Mr. Chairman, we fully support the ruling you have just made on procedural issues. That has been the understanding of my delegation and is written in the rules of procedure.

We listened very carefully to what our colleague from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea said in his last statement. It was not surprising, but very disappointing. If I go into detail on the issue of United States troops in Korea, I think it might be inevitable that we would spend several hours arguing with the North Koreans. It is well known that this is for defence purpose and is in accordance with a mutual defence treaty between sovereign States similar to those we see everywhere else throughout the world where countries are faced with a threat from foreign forces.

I do not want to go into detail as to the nature of the threat we in the Republic of Korea are facing from the north, because this would not be helpful to a constructive discussion in this meeting. They have a huge military buildup and a full deployment of artillery whose range includes the capital of the Republic of Korea, less than 30 miles away. There has been infiltration by submarines, and the list goes on. I will not go into detail but will just leave it to the members of the Committee.

I am saying this not to confront the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea but to help achieve reconciliation. So through you, Mr. Chairman, I wish to appeal to the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to understand our genuine intentions. We wish to find a peaceful solution to these issues, which are of the utmost interest to us. I would hope that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea one day could respond positively to this approach.

**The Chairman** (*interpretation from French*): I now call on those representatives who wish to speak a second time in exercise of the right of reply.

**Mr. Esenli** (Turkey): For the record, I should like to reiterate that the unfounded allegations made by the previous speaker, the Greek Cypriot representative, using the usurped seat of the Republic of Cyprus, will be duly replied to by their interlocutor, the representative of the Turkish Republic of Cyprus.

**Mr. Zackheos** (Cyprus): The delegation of Turkey continues to refer to the illegal entity in the north and does not accept the legality of the Government of the Republic of Cyprus. Throughout history no invader has ever accepted the legality of its victim, so I see no reason why Turkey should have a different attitude.

His right of reply gives me the opportunity to say that our objection to the nuclear power plant in southern Turkey stems from the fact that this area lies in a very seismic region, and we have serious environmental concerns besides the security considerations. I will make available to all delegations the relevant report from Greenpeace in order to show that our allegations are based on fact.

**The Chairman** (*interpretation from French*): I wish to say to the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea that twice I read him the rules of procedure governing rights of reply. I do not intend to stray from the rules of procedure and am therefore unable to give him the floor a third time.

*The meeting rose at 12.25 p.m.*

United Nations A/C.1/53/PV.13

# General Assembly

Fifty-third Session

## First Committee

13th Meeting
Thursday, 22 October 1998, 3 p.m.
New York

*Official Records*

*Chairman*: Mr. Mernier . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . (Belgium)

*The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.*

**Agenda items 63 to 80** *(continued)*

**Thematic discussion on item subjects; introduction and consideration of all draft resolutions submitted under all items**

**The Chairman** (*interpretation from French*): This meeting will be devoted to consideration of agenda item 80, rationalization.

(*spoke in English*)

More precisely, we will consider the rationalization of the work and reform of the agenda of the First Committee.

As delegations are aware, by decision 52/416 B, adopted on 29 June this year, the General Assembly requested the Chairman of the First Committee to continue consultations with regard to the revitalization, rationalization and streamlining of the work and reform of the agenda of the Committee in all its aspects and to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-third session.

(*spoke in French*)

I should like to inform the Committee that I have held consultations in the framework of the Bureau along those lines. Before I report the results of those consultations, I would like to give those delegations wishing to speak the opportunity to do so.

I call on the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on a point of order.

**Mr. Ri Jang Gon** (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): I have asked for the floor to seek clarification in relation to procedural matters, as Member States might be well aware. My first point relates to the exercise of the right of reply. My delegation understands that Member States can exercise the right of reply twice per agenda item, not twice per meeting. I hope that the Bureau has a copy of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, document A/520/Rev.15, which, in paragraph 9 on page 67, reads as follows:

> "The number of interventions in the exercise of the right of reply for any delegation at a given meeting should be limited to two per item."

My delegation understands that each Member State can exercise its right of reply twice per agenda item, not twice per meeting. However, in your ruling yesterday, Mr Chairman, you said that each Member State could exercise its right of reply only twice per meeting.

If Member States follow this logic, then they can speak in exercise of the right of reply more than twice per agenda item, depending on the duration of the discussion on each agenda item. In other words, we could engage in endless debates through the exercise of the right of reply on a per-agenda-item basis. My delegation asks the Bureau for a clarification. This is not for the sake of my country only, but for the sake of all Member States that might have to deal with the exercise of the right of reply at a later time.

Secondly, with regard to points of order, I raised my flag yesterday for that very reason to ask for clarification. However, for no reason, the Chairman neglected to respond

This record contains the original texts of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, Room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

to my request. That is a violation of the rules of procedure and also an act of discrimination against a Member State that has a legitimate right to speak on a point of order. In this connection, I think that the Chairman and those members of the Bureau who advised the Chairman to do so should take full responsibility. I sincerely ask the Bureau to apologize for their wrongdoing. This is, again, not for the sake of my country but in the interest of all Member States, so that the same mistake cannot be repeated in connection with other legitimate Member States at another time.

**The Chairman** (*interpretation from French*): I shall be very brief in my reply. The Chair assumes responsibility for all decisions and for all procedures that we put into effect.

As regards the right of reply, we would suggest to the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea that it approach the Bureau, which in due course will consult with the legal division of the Organization. I should like to know if that reply satisfies the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

**Mr. Ri Jang Gon** (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Thank you for the clarification. Mr. Chairman, if you wish to cooperate with me concerning this misconduct with respect to the exercise of the right of reply, I will be at your disposal.

Secondly, I ask the Bureau to apologize for not giving me permission to speak on a point of order.

**The Chairman** (*interpretation from French*): I should like now to return to the subject of this afternoon's meeting. I will repeat my question: are there any delegations that wish this afternoon to speak on the agenda item before us this afternoon?

I note that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea wishes to speak once again.

**Mr. Ri Jang Gon** (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): I raise this question for the purpose of a very simple clarification with respect to two things.

According to your ruling yesterday, Mr. Chairman, can Member States understand that they can exercise the right of reply more than twice per agenda item? That is a very simple question.

Secondly, in relation to my request to speak on a point of order, which was turned down for no reason, I ask for a response from the Bureau before we proceed to another agenda item.

**The Chairman** (*interpretation from French*): As I suggested to the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the problem is that the First Committee, in its general debate, deals with all agenda items. Therefore it is extremely difficult to determine whether a right of reply is being exercised on one or several agenda items. In the circumstances, it is up to the Bureau, and more specifically the Chairman, to make a judgment call, which is what I did yesterday afternoon.

I would suggest is that we now proceed to the actual work before us this afternoon. I thank the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea for his understanding, and I reiterate my offer to see him in private, with the Bureau and with the legal counsel of the General Assembly and the Organization, on this question.

I would like to conclude discussion on this particular issue now. I am not prepared to continue this debate and to take the time of 150 delegations on this matter. I made an offer to the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. I believe he has accepted it, and I will take it now that the debate on this subject is closed.

Would any other delegation like to take the floor on the subject before us this afternoon — agenda item 80, on the rationalization of the work of the First Committee?

**Mr. Hajnoczi** (Austria): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia — and the associated country Cyprus, as well as the European Free Trade Association countries members of the European Economic Area — Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway — align themselves with this statement.

In the general debate we emphasized that the rationalization of the work and the reform of the agenda of the First Committee remain a priority for the European Union. We were therefore encouraged by the opening statement of the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, who called on us to update, streamline and revitalize our work and who expressed his interest in the result of our discussions thereon.

We consider the reform of our working methods and of the organization of our work to be an ongoing process geared to the changing requirements and expectations imposed on us by a world that is changing at a faster pace than ever. The disarmament world should be no exception to this development, and the methods of work and the organization of the First Committee have to undergo constant examination.

I want to be very clear on this point. We do not want reform for reform's sake. We want reforms that make our work more useful, more efficient and also more understandable to a wider public, which sometimes might be deterred from developing greater interest in our deliberations by simply trying to find its way through the agenda of the First Committee.

We should therefore aim at reorganizing and reforming our Committee to make it more user-friendly — user-friendly to delegations and national Governments, as well as to non-governmental organizations, journalists and the public at large. Our objective should be to better organize our debates, to make them more focused and to produce results which are not only understandable to the chosen few gathered in this room today, but to a wider audience.

During the fifty-second session of the General Assembly, we achieved consensus on a number of measures to improve the quality of the work of our Committee, to make better use of the scarce financial and logistic resources of the Secretariat and to organize our work more in line with the concrete demands of our important deliberations.

We agreed to shorten the length of the First Committee's sessions and to improve our methods of work by merging the thematic debate with the introduction and consideration of draft resolutions. The latter should allow for a more focused and output-oriented discussion during the second part of our substantive work session. The European Union is looking forward to the implementation of these decisions during our current session.

This year, we intend to build on the achievements of previous General Assembly sessions and to focus our attention on the question of the reform of the agenda of the First Committee. The current agenda does not follow any specific logic. It is the result of successive additions to a core agenda. The result is both difficult to manage and difficult to comprehend.

In our view, we should therefore reclassify the existing items according to a simple, logical thematic approach — one which we have already adopted in resolution 48/87 and implemented in the presentation and consideration of draft resolutions in the substantive work of the First Committee. We would then assign each item a place on the agenda alongside other items dealing with the same broad subject. We would then work our way through the agenda, rather than being forced to resort to the complex arrangements that we currently go through. Such a logical reordering would not only facilitate a more focused discussion, but would give delegations a clearer picture of each issue and its relationship to others.

Such an approach should be discussed thoroughly in order to reach a solution satisfactory to all, and we trust in the Chairman to conduct deliberations on the subject during the coming weeks of our work.

It is the view of the European Union that many items that appear on the agenda of the First Committee deserve our yearly attention, due to the important developments that we witness and the dynamics of the international discussion on these items. Other issues undergo less rapid change and could therefore be debated only every second or third year. We should all exercise some restraint in putting such items on the agenda every year. The annual appearance of an item on the agenda should not be interpreted as the measure of the importance of the item. The quality of the deliberations is the only relevant criterion and a productive debate every second or third year does better service to an issue than the automatic inclusion of an item on the agenda every year.

The same holds true for reports of the Secretary-General. Here, too, we should exercise some self-restraint in asking for countless reports that burden the Secretariat with additional work and which, despite the best efforts of the Secretariat to fulfil these mandates, sometimes contribute little to the actual work done in the First Committee. At the same time, the reports of the Secretariat could be of a more synoptic nature to give delegations an overview of the current developments and discussions on a specific item, instead of just containing the responses of Member States on specific questions.

Every delegation in this room shares the wish to make our work more productive and to use our time and resources as effectively and efficiently as possible. Such practical steps as starting on time are a welcome initiative to contribute to this common objective. We have proof of this common interest in last year's agreement. Let us try to build upon this achievement. Reform, revitalization and rationalization are not an issue which lends itself to politicization and sterile ideological debate. We should all endeavour to find the common ground on which we can proceed to improve our work. The European Union stands ready to contribute constructively to this common effort during the whole fifty-third session of the General Assembly.

**Ms. Koppe** (Australia): My delegation would like to make just a few brief points on the important subject of rationalization of the work of the First Committee, which is a priority issue for Australia.

Australia welcomes the progress made at the resumed session of the First Committee during the fifty-second session of the General Assembly. We welcome the decisions to cap the duration of the Committee's sessions and to streamline its programme of work. It is important now that we maximize the advantages of these reforms by utilizing the time freed up to undertake more intensive and serious consultations on draft resolutions with a view to narrowing the very wide divergences of views on certain issues.

We would like to stress the importance, also, of maintaining momentum on this agenda item, the most pressing priorities being to restructure the agenda so that it is more logical and meaningful. Without wishing to denigrate the importance of the special sessions that generated a number of compendium items on our agenda, it is time to frame the agenda so that it communicates more clearly what the Committee is really doing. One way of doing this, as our European Union colleagues have suggested, is to group the items according to theme.

In addition, my delegation considers that much more work can be done to encourage biennializing or triennializing certain resolutions. There are too many resolutions on our agenda which are of a routine nature and do not address events of immediate concern. This is borne out by the fact that the texts are virtually identical each year. Such resolutions should, at the very least, be biennialized and it is clear that very little effort is being made in this direction at the present time.

We would welcome informal consultations on such an exercise, to commence at this substantive session of the Committee with a view to decisions on further rationalization being made during the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly.

**Mr. Manickam** (India): I will make only very brief and preliminary comments on the Chairman's non-paper. We need to study it very carefully. We will come back with detailed comments on it on every issue.

There are two things I would like to mention that come to mind immediately. We would like agenda item 73 — "Review of the implementation of the recommendations and decisions adopted by the General Assembly at its tenth special session" — to appear as a separate agenda item. It has a lot of meaning for my delegation. We would like to have the main, broad outline of the agenda item — there are four sub-items under it — to remain as it is.

My second observation relates to the listing of the item on the role of science and technology in the context of international security and disarmament under "Other international security matters". We do not agree with that categorization; that item should not come under international security matters. We had seen an earlier paper that included the category "Collateral disarmament measures", and we would strongly request that the item on the role of science and technology should be listed under the heading "Collateral disarmament measures".

**The Chairman:** The non-paper that was circulated this afternoon is obviously a compromise among different views. The Bureau cannot accommodate all views. In any case, I have taken note of the observations made by the representative of India; they will be discussed again by the Bureau and we will see if we can reach agreement on them.

**Mr. Manickam** (India): This is the first time I have been made aware of this proposed arrangement of items; I believe the Bureau took the responsibility of reorganizing it, but I think all that members should be given the chance to comment on the arrangement. My delegation was not consulted on it. We had, of course, seen some papers, but we thought the matter was going to be discussed in informal consultations. We are still available for consultations whenever we are needed.

**The Chairman:** The intention is that this non-paper should be an attachment to a decision by the Chairman, as was done last year. Before we decide on the final version of the attachment, we will have consultations with interested delegations. So this is not the end of play for the non-paper. We will try to accommodate all wishes.

**Ms. Rovirosa** (Mexico) (*interpretation from Spanish*): My delegation is grateful for the Chairman's non-paper, some elements of which are certainly most interesting. We think it is good that the Committee is working in a positive way to rationalize its work as much as possible. We believe, however, that every proposal should be the subject of careful consideration, and we are fully prepared to participate constructively in all consultations with a view to reaching a conclusion that would make it possible for the work of the First Committee to be carried out with the greatest possible effectiveness.

**Mr. Kim Moon-hwan** (Republic of Korea): I wish today to present my delegation's views on the issue of the rationalization of the work of the First Committee. My delegation notes with appreciation that progress was achieved last June at the resumed fifty-second session of the General Assembly. The crux of the decision adopted was that the work of the First Committee should be conducted and concluded within 30 meetings and within a time-frame not exceeding five weeks. On the basis of recent experience, that objective looks practicable and tenable if we conduct our business in a timely and efficient manner.

I wish now to make some suggestions on substantive issues relating to the rationalization of the work of the First Committee. With regard to the agenda of the Committee, it is fair to say the current agenda does not follow any logical pattern. An agenda rearranged in several clusters similar to those used in recent years would provide a useful framework for facilitating the organization of our work and for expediting the Committee's deliberations. In this regard, my delegation believes that the proposals made by the European Union and Canada last year deserve serious consideration.

In that connection, my delegation thanks the Secretariat for providing copies of the proposed rearrangement of the agenda for the First Committee. After careful study and consideration, my delegation the day before yesterday communicated its views through the Chairman of the Asian Group. Permit me to summarize my delegation's proposals. First, my delegation was of the view that the idea of establishing a separate section entitled "Transparency and confidence-building" had some merit, and that this section could contain three subitems. My delegation is very glad to see that the non-paper before us reflects our view. Secondly, it was our view that the section entitled "Collateral disarmament measures" should be renamed "Other disarmament and international security matters"; again, my delegation is pleased to find that the non-paper reflects our position.

Under our proposal, there would have been no separate section on "Prevention of an arms race", and its two subitems would have been included under "Other disarmament and international security matters". We can, however, go along with the format set out in the non-paper.

All in all, despite some divergences of view on the details of the various sections, my delegation believes that the Chairman's non-paper will be a good basis for progress.

Regarding the draft resolutions of the First Committee, there is no denying that a considerable number of draft resolutions are repeatedly submitted in the First Committee every year with no substantial changes. This practice prevents us from concentrating on items that require in-depth, productive debate. Items and their related draft resolutions should not be discussed every year in an nearly automatic manner; it is our firm view that more items and draft resolutions should be biennialized or triennialized, and I add my voice to that of the representative of Australia in that regard. In addition, we believe it would be desirable to adopt certain routine or procedural draft resolutions as draft decisions rather than in their present form.

Like other efforts to reform the United Nations, our rationalization effort should be an ongoing and continuing process. We do not agree that there should be drastic changes in the working methods of the First Committee. However, we should not hesitate to offer fresh ideas for securing efficiency and transparency in the work of the First Committee.

**The Chairman** (*interpretation from French*): As the representative of the Republic of Korea said, many of the proposals made by his delegation and by the Asian Group in general are reflected in the non-paper before the Committee. That was indeed the spirit in which the document was prepared. And let me repeat that it is not a final document: next week there will be informal consultations among interested delegations on the work remaining to be done on the document.

**Mr. Abdelaziz** (Egypt): My delegation too wishes to make some general remarks at this stage, pending detailed discussion of the Chairman's proposed rearrangement of the agenda for the First Committee.

I would like first of all to express our happiness and sincere appreciation to the Chairman of the First Committee at its last session for his efforts, which have already led to the adoption of a decision at the resumed session to limit the length of the First Committee's sessions and to merge the thematic debate with the introduction and consideration of draft resolutions. That decision was a very positive sign in the right direction.

There are many issues that we can discuss under this particular item. I am sure one of them is the rearrangement of the agenda items of the First Committee. This is a very important subject, and I am sure that there will be further elaboration and discussion of this idea in informal consultations and in the regional groups — and particularly of your proposal, Mr. Chairman, for the preparation and presentation of which we would like to thank you and the Bureau very much.

I just wanted to make some general comments in this particular regard. The first is that it is my understanding that the proposed rearrangement is only a rearrangement of the agenda items and that we are not discussing merging agenda items, whether those agenda items are similar or different, and that our discussion will be limited only to rearranging the agenda items as they exist. It is the firm conviction of my delegation that we cannot merge items or delete any item from the agenda without the consent of the State of States that have requested that these items be inscribed on the agenda. Every one of us attaches special importance to some items rather than others. But, of course, this is a very sensitive issue that deals with the sovereign rights of States to have their issues discussed in the General Assembly. So I hope we will have a chance to elaborate upon that when we discuss this informally. But the main direction is acceptable, and we can discuss it further.

There are other issues, some of which have been touched upon today by the representative of Austria on behalf of the European Union. One important issue that we discussed last year, although perhaps informally — and I think the time has come to take action on it — is the harmonization of the voting conducted in the First Committee and the one conducted in the General Assembly. In the First Committee we vote on draft resolutions presented under L-numbered documents. The reports of the First Committee to the General Assembly are issued under a totally different format, reverting to the original item number in the agenda of the General Assembly. I must say that his is something that creates a lot of confusion: we vote on a draft resolution here under a certain cluster and then we go into the General Assembly and find that the draft resolutions are scattered throughout many items according to the agenda of the General Assembly. So this is also one very important issue that I hope we will have the time to address this year under this agenda item and to see what we can recommend to harmonize the voting process here in the First Committee with the voting process on our draft resolutions in the General Assembly as well. My delegation will be very positive in the consideration of the Chairman's paper and of other proposals that have been put on the table today.

**The Chairman**: All delegations have seen, obviously, that we are not deleting any items. All the original items are back in the paper. I must also point out that there were proposals to merge a few items that are very close, if not identical. But for the reasons just explained, we refrained from doing that.

**Mr. DuPreez** (South Africa): Like previous speakers, my delegation would also like to register its appreciation for the immense task of rearranging the items in a more logical way that you have embarked upon, Mr. Chairman, about which you have already prepared a non-paper. We would certainly be interested in exploring this further, especially in view of the decision taken at the resumed session of the First Committee during the fifty-second session with regard to reducing the time-frame of the Committee and to combine the thematic debate with the consideration of draft resolutions. We see this as yet another step forward.

But we would also like to stress that we have to go slowly and carefully in this area and that we would certainly need more time to reflect not only on the headings, but also on which items should fit under other headings. In a first reading, we would prefer if we could perhaps stick as closely as possible to the cluster headings that we had last year in the debate of the L-numbered draft resolutions. In this context, I would like to add my support to what has just been said by the representative of Egypt. There is also a lot of confusion in my delegation when it comes to voting in the General Assembly. It not only would make it easier to vote there, but it could make it easier to prepare for the meetings of the First Committee.

We would also like to stress that, given the urgency that we have to complete draft resolutions, we should consider that we need more time to look at these issues, which are of the utmost importance. We cannot simply rearrange for the sake of rearranging, but we need to look at a logical order. At the same time, we are not ready and we have no mandate to even suggest that certain items be combined or deleted, and I support the statement that the Chairman has just made in that regard. It is for the countries or the States that support those draft resolutions themselves to decide, and we have to adhere to that.

We would look forward to further informal consultations in this regard. I think that we need to give the regional groups further time to consider this issue further in the week to come.

**Mr. Mesdoua** (Algeria) (*interpretation from French*): As delegations before me have done, I would also like to express my appreciation to you personally, Mr. Chairman, for the work that has been done on the proposal to rearrange the agenda of the First Committee.

We believe that this document is a fine basis for further improvements and calls for more in-depth and detailed consideration. I also believe — and I have heard several statements by various delegations to this effect — that, as we emphasized last year when we looked at the question of rationalization, there are certain difficulties related to the large number of draft resolutions presented annually in the First Committee. This represents an enormous task and a handicap when there are over 40 draft resolutions, sometimes three or four per item. So perhaps we should think about all the ways in which we can rationalize the consideration of these questions.

But I think there are also some difficulties in doing this. Based on the interest expressed by certain delegations on these very items, it will be difficult to tell them to accept introducing their draft resolutions only once every two or three years.

But to return to the proposal to rearrange the agenda of the First Committee, my delegation stated last year that it was in complete agreement in this regard because it seems to us that the dispersal of the items makes them difficult to examine. We also stated that we were therefore fully ready to accept the idea of rearranging them. We also insisted on the idea that in this respect there should be very well-defined clusters that include the questions of nuclear disarmament and weapons of mass destruction, as the Chairman's paper does. We will therefore send these documents to our authorities so that they can be looked at more closely.

We would like to ask the Chairman for the opportunity to come back with more detailed and developed comments so that we can, as national delegations, express our concerns on all the points and on the rearrangement as a whole.

**The Chairman:** I wish to say a few words about the paper that members have in front of them and to stress that we have limited the changes to only a few. Members will see that, compared with the past, there is absolutely no change in substance to the "Nuclear weapons" cluster; the same for "Other weapons of mass destruction" and "Conventional weapons". We have a new cluster, "Transparency and confidence-building measures". It was suggested by the representative of the Asian Group. We believe that it makes sense.

*(spoke in French)*

The same goes for "Prevention of an arms race".

I invite delegations to look at this paper, taking into consideration that it has been prepared on the basis of their own comments. It is not the Bureau that established the content of this paper. It is the result of comments made by the various regional groups.

Does any other delegation wish to take the floor on this subject?

**Mr. Dehghani** (Iran): First of all, I would like to thank you, Mr. Chairman, for preparing this non-paper. Unfortunately, since we are a small delegation, due to other engagements I did not have enough time to look at it. I arrived just now. However, I would like to make preliminary comments on the last part of the paper, comments that I have already given to the Chairman of the Asian Group.

On the item on the "Role of science and technology in the context of international security, disarmament and other related fields", my delegation is of the view that this item cannot be grouped with other international security matters. It has other aspects. I suggested that this item be shifted to another grouping. It would be appreciated if this idea could be taken into account in a further elaboration.

**The Chairman** (*interpretation from French*): I would like to remind members that next week the Bureau will hold informal meetings on this document. Delegations should be advised that they are all welcome to participate. I thus invite delegations to think about this document before making detailed proposals and to formulate, in writing if possible, their suggestions for these initial meetings.

*(spoke in English)*

The procedure the Chair would like to follow is to allow delegations to review this non-paper more closely over the next several days. The Chair will then call an informal meeting to discuss comments on the non-paper. If general agreement is reached on a way to rearrange the agenda items, I shall prepare it as a draft decision of the Chairman for implementation at the fifty-fourth session. The Committee will take up the decision during the action phase.

Are there any comments on the procedure I am recommending?

If not, I would like to remind delegations that the deadlines established by the Committee itself for the submission of draft resolutions will be adhered to.

Let me review. Draft resolutions under all the international security and disarmament agenda items — that is, items 63 to 79 — are to be delivered to the Secretariat by 1 p.m. tomorrow, Friday, 23 October.

Draft resolutions under agenda item 80, "Rationalization of the work and reform of the agenda of the First Committee", are due by 6 p.m. tomorrow. In connection with these draft resolutions, I would like to point out that this later deadline will not apply to any eventual decision that the Chairman might propose regarding the rearrangement of agenda items.

**Mr. DuPreez** (South Africa): I am sorry to take the floor again, but I wish to just make a brief statement and to urge you, Mr. Chairman, to consider this request from at least the countries of the Non-Aligned Movement, which South Africa represents, to carefully reconsider the deadline. When the deadline was decided on during the organizational session of this Committee we indicated that we would meet it to the extent possible. But we have to stay focused on what we are doing in the First Committee. We are busy here with a multitude of issues and draft resolutions, and it is impossible to have solid draft resolutions if one has to race for time.

Not only does the Non-Aligned Movement have a number of its own draft resolutions that it needs to further consider, it also has draft resolutions that are not necessarily Non-Aligned Movement draft resolutions. In order to come up with meaningful draft resolutions — which is, after all, why we are here — on behalf of the countries of the Non-Aligned Movement and, I think also a number of other countries, we would like to urge the Chair to reconsider the deadline. We would like to suggest that the deadline be postponed until 6 p.m. Monday.

**The Chairman** (*interpretation from French*): This question was put to the Bureau this morning. The problem that arises is one for the Secretariat. The entire Secretariat is mobilized for this weekend.

I understand full well the concerns of delegations that they be able to present their draft resolutions under the best possible conditions. Thus, and in agreement with the Secretariat, the Chair will postpone the deadline for the submission of draft resolutions on security matters to 6 p.m. tomorrow. But we cannot go beyond that.

**Mr. Mesdoua** (Algeria) (*interpretation from French*): I fully respect the decision made by the Bureau.

I believe that it is also a question, given the current circumstances of the Organization, of avoiding as far as possible unnecessary expenses that could result from the revision of proposals submitted. I fully agree with you, Mr. Chairman, that there should be a deadline for the draft resolutions that have already been prepared and on which the consultations are almost finalized.

Thus, I would ask the Bureau and the Chair for a little more flexibility so that tomorrow, Friday, at 6 p.m., the draft resolutions already ready could be submitted. As for those still requiring consultations — draft resolutions such as those the representative of South Africa just mentioned — I ask for a little more time — until Monday — to allow delegations to submit their finalized drafts, thereby perhaps avoiding revisions that would have financial implications that no one in this room wishes to incur.

These draft resolutions of the First Committee are extremely sensitive, and thus at times require lengthy consultations. This is why I appeal to the Bureau and to the Chairman to have the flexibility that we have enjoyed every year at every session of First Committee.

**Mr. Manickam** (India): I support the previous two speakers, South Africa and Algeria. In fact, this was a subject of discussion in the Non-Aligned Movement working group today. We thought we should ask you, Mr. Chairman, to be more flexible, because the time is too short.

**The Chairman** (*interpretation from French*): I should nonetheless like to remind representatives that, at the request of one of the delegations of the Non-Aligned Movement group, the original deadline had already been deferred to 12 p.m. Friday. I have now deferred it again to 6 p.m.

I shall now give the floor to the Secretary of the Committee, who will give us some details on the implications of the deferral of the deadline.

**Mr. Lin Kuo-Chung** (Secretary of the Committee): After listening to several delegations in connection with the extension of the deadline for the draft resolutions, I should like to make the following points.

First, last year there was no extension. There was one the year before, of course, and it caused some confusion and resulted in some complaints. So last year the deadline was strictly observed, and there was no problem. This year the original programme of work set the deadline about two days in advance — actually, on Wednesday. This was proposed with the understanding that the deadline would be observed, and that is why it was changed to Friday.

The Secretariat already has organized and mobilized the available human resources to deal with the tremendous number of draft resolutions. As of now we have only three draft resolutions, and we anticipate about 50. In other words, the Secretariat will face tremendous pressures and difficulties in getting them out, because on Monday and Tuesday Documents Control has to deal with other committees, which also have their documents. It is for that reason that Documents Control has already informed all the translators and editors that they should be ready for tomorrow evening. By tomorrow at 1 p.m., or 6 p.m. if the deadline is extended, we have to finish all 50 draft resolutions so that the translators and all other personnel concerned can work through the weekend and get everything out on Monday. In that way next week, according to our programme of work, we can deal mainly with thematic discussions, introduction of the draft resolutions and so on. That is all I want to say. This deadline has to be strictly observed so that the agreed programme can be implemented.

**Mrs. Rovirosa** (Mexico) (*interpretation from Spanish*): My delegation would also like to join the appeal of the delegations of South Africa, Algeria and India that the deadline for the submission of draft resolutions be postponed until Monday at 6 p.m. We understand the explanation just given by the Secretary of the Committee regarding the enormous amount of work and difficulties involved in this postponement. But we also consider that draft resolutions should be duly negotiated and that in order for them to be well presented and viable, it is at times necessary to postpone the deadline for submission.

**Mr. Abdelaziz** (Egypt): I shall be very brief, as I do not wish to repeat what the previous speakers have just said. Of course, we understand all of the circumstances that Mr. Lin has just outlined. But allowing additional time for the consideration and preparation of draft resolutions will also save the Secretariat the trouble of issuing many revisions for each of the draft resolutions. Furthermore, if considerations arise which might require delegations to communicate with their capitals for instructions, I think the weekend will provide ample time for all delegations to do so. I would therefore join those who are seeking your indulgence, Mr. Chairman, and that of the Secretariat to postpone the deadline to Monday at 6 p.m.

**The Chairman** (*interpretation from French*): Before responding to the various delegations that have spoken, I should like to suspend the meeting for five minutes in order to consult with the members of the Bureau.

*The meeting was suspended at 4.10 p.m. and resumed at 4.15 p.m.*

**The Chairman** (*interpretation from French*): As members know, the Bureau is perfectly entitled to decide to retain the deadline for the submission of draft resolutions, but it understands the arguments that have been put forward by various delegations. The Bureau is also responsible for the proper functioning of the Secretariat and wishes to ensure that it be maintained.

Consequently, I propose the following solution. The deadline will be retained at 6 p.m. tomorrow, except for 10 draft resolutions. I am prepared to accept by noon tomorrow the postponement of the submission of 10 draft resolutions. That is the solution proposed by the Secretariat. It will make it possible for the Secretariat to do its normal work on Saturday and Sunday and for various delegations to work on sensitive draft resolutions, which I hope will not exceed 10 in number.

That is my proposal to delegations and I should like to hear their reactions to it.

**Mr. Mesdoua** (Algeria) (*interpretation from French*): I wish first to thank you, Sir, for this display of flexibility by you and the Bureau on the deadline for submission.

Nevertheless, it seems to me that it will be hard to determine which 10 draft resolutions are to be chosen, given that, at this juncture, every one, including those that moments ago were not remotely sensitive, may suddenly become extremely sensitive and require our attention throughout the weekend. Thus, the Bureau should tell us which they are, since any delegation is very likely to claim its draft resolution among the 10.

I would therefore ask you, Sir, to specify which 10 are to be chosen. If it should prove difficult to identify the 10 draft resolutions that are to enjoy the extension until Monday, perhaps we might say that any delegation — other than those that are ready to submit draft resolutions tomorrow, of which there may be quite a few — wishing to hold further consultations may do so on Monday. I do not believe it unreasonable, with the revisions to be made — which, given the financial and logistical stakes for the Secretariat, are certain to proceed at a breathtaking pace — to request a grace period to benefit all those delegations that are as yet unready to submit their draft resolutions.

**Mr. Manickam** (India): I should like to hear your view, Sir, on the statement just made by our colleague from Algeria. As far as our draft resolutions are concerned, however, we will try to submit them by tomorrow. I thank you once again for showing flexibility, but we are waiting for an answer to the valid question raised by Algeria.

**Mr. Du Preez** (South Africa): I, too, thank you, Sir, for showing some flexibility. As a national delegation, we would very much try to accommodate your wish that we submit our various draft resolutions and the various draft resolutions that we subscribe to by tomorrow afternoon at 6 p.m. But we, like the delegation of Algeria, would like to know which 10? What happens if there are 11 or 12?

I think we need to show greater flexibility, to allow delegations with draft resolutions with serious problems to submit them on Monday while the rest of the texts can be submitted tomorrow and be processed by the Secretariat, as Mr. Lin indicated earlier.

**The Chairman** (*interpretation from French*): We seem gradually to be approaching a solution.

I would appreciate it if the various groups could let me know by 3 p.m. tomorrow how many, and which, draft resolutions should be granted this extension. I hope that there will be no more than 10 such texts. It is not for me as Chairman to decide for delegations which draft resolutions are the sensitive ones. May I take it that this arrangement is suitable to the delegations concerned?

*It was so decided.*

## Statement by the Chairman

**The Chairman** (*interpretation from French*): I wish to announce that, in the light of conversations with the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, it appears that yesterday's exchange between that delegation and the Chair took place on the basis of a misunderstanding. The Chair wishes to express its regret at that misunderstanding and hopes that such misunderstandings will not arise in the future.

*The meeting rose at 4.25 p.m.*

United Nations
A/C.1/53/PV.14

# General Assembly
Fifty-third session

Official Records

## First Committee

## 14th Meeting
Friday, 23 October 1998, 3 p.m.
New York

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*Chairman*: Mr. Mernier . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . (Belgium)

*The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.*

**Agenda items 63 to 80** (*continued*)

**Thematic discussion on item subjects; introduction and consideration of all draft resolutions submitted under all items**

**The Chairman** (*interpretation from French*): I should like first to remind delegations that if they wish an extension of time for the submission of draft resolutions they should inform me during this meeting.

(*spoke in English*)

I repeat: If delegations have any draft resolutions that they do not think can be ready for today, I ask them please to inform us of those that they wish to benefit from an extension.

In accordance with the programme of work and agreed timetable, this afternoon the Committee will move to the second stage of its work.

**Mr. Shterk** (Bulgaria): Since this is the first time I have spoken in the Committee, and since this is the first intervention in the thematic debate, I wish to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the Chair, and to express my confidence that under your able guidance the work of the Committee will make further significant progress.

In his statement made on behalf of the European Union, the representative of Austria outlined in a very clear manner the major areas where the First Committee will have to concentrate its efforts. This delegation has associated itself with that statement. I will therefore confine my intervention to a few issues of importance to my country. But before I do so allow me briefly to acquaint members with the basic premises of the Bulgarian Government's approach to security and disarmament.

Bulgaria favours what it calls a multidimensional vision of security, an approach attempting to take into account all pertinent security-related factors at different levels — universal, continental, regional and national. A cornerstone of Bulgaria's security policy is the pursuit of a speedy integration into the Euro-Atlantic security structures. A translation of this Euro-Atlantic orientation at the regional level is the active role my country plays in the promotion and development of security and defence cooperation among States in South-Eastern Europe, a process which gained momentum and substance at the Sofia Defence Ministerial in October 1997 and which was further advanced last September in Skopje.

We have the ambition of being a key factor in the emergence and reinforcement of what we call a belt of security around the troubled area in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. This belt would comprise the stable democratic States in that part of Europe, able to project stability and spread the culture of democracy and peace throughout the region.

It is in this context that we continue to regard arms control and disarmament issues as integral elements of Bulgaria's security policy.

This record contains the original texts of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, Room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

Bulgaria continues to be deeply concerned about the situation in Kosovo. We are committed to remaining actively involved in the efforts of the international community to find a just and lasting solution to the conflict, based on respect for the rights and freedoms of all inhabitants of Kosovo and respect for the existing borders and territorial integrity of the States in the region. Being situated very close to Kosovo, Bulgaria naturally shares the concerns of the international community related to the proliferation of small arms in areas of internal conflict. Therefore, the Bulgarian Government supports the integrated and comprehensive approach adopted in the United Nations. We expect the United Nations to play a major role in promoting the control and reduction of small arms in a balanced and non-discriminatory manner.

In this regard, Bulgaria welcomes the valuable contribution made so far by the Panel of Governmental Experts, chaired by Ambassador Donowaki of Japan. We are expecting further measures and activities to be outlined in the Secretary-General's report to be presented at the fifty-fourth session.

My country supports the convening of an international conference on the illicit arms trade in all its aspects, and expects a decision to this effect to be taken at the present session. We share the view that the exact time for the conference should be determined as soon as the preparatory process is completed. The broadest possible understanding of the objectives, scope and agenda of the conference should be pursued among all interested countries as a substantive prerequisite for its success.

Bulgaria is deeply concerned that the insufficient control of arms trafficking in certain countries and areas in South-Eastern Europe continues to have a negative impact on security- and stability-building efforts in our region. In order to address this and other challenges to regional security, the Bulgarian Government has launched a number of initiatives, including common activities to prevent illicit arms trafficking. In this regard, we concur with the view expressed by the recent Oslo meeting on small arms, that regional and subregional arrangements may be one way for Governments to successfully tackle this issue.

In recent years Bulgaria has repeatedly declared its adherence to the internationally recognized guidelines and rules relating to trade in arms and arms production technologies. These declarations have been backed by the establishment of a strict control and licensing regime in order to prevent unauthorized arms transfers. Currently Bulgaria is applying one of the most stringent policies with regard to arms control and trade in dual-use goods.

Another related issue to which Bulgaria has attributed particular importance in recent years is that of anti-personnel landmines. Convinced of the need to solve the great humanitarian problem caused by these deadly weapons, my country signed the Ottawa Convention in December 1997. We contributed further to the early entry into force of the Convention by being among the first 40 countries, and the first in South-Eastern Europe, to ratify this important instrument. We are now looking forward to the first meeting of the States parties to the Convention, and welcome the proposal made by Mozambique to host the meeting.

Being strongly committed to a timely and strict compliance with its obligations under the Ottawa Convention, Bulgaria would greatly appreciate appropriate support, including financial support, related in particular to mine clearance and the destruction of existing anti-personnel landmine stockpiles.

On the other hand, Bulgaria understands and respects the legitimate concerns of some countries that find it difficult at present to join the Ottawa process. In this regard, we believe that there is still room for the Conference on Disarmament to contribute to the fundamental goal of the complete elimination of anti-personnel landmines.

In conclusion, may I dwell on another important subject of relevance to us. The delegation of Bulgaria remains committed to respect for the internationally recognized nuclear-weapon-free zones, based on arrangements freely agreed upon by the States concerned. They remain, in our view, an important element in international security and confidence-building and a relevant instrument of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The establishment of new such zones will certainly contribute to furthering nuclear disarmament, on condition that due account is taken of the legitimate security concerns of the States in question and that their right to freely choose their security arrangements is respected. Therefore, we believe that any new initiative in this area, in order to be productive, should be carefully prepared and discussed in advance with all the parties likely to be interested. Unfortunately, that seems not to have been the case with the most recent initiative on regional disarmament relating to Central and Eastern Europe, which was put forth in the absence of appropriate preceding consultations with all the parties concerned. Therefore, we retain our strong reservations about the outcome of that idea.

**The Chairman:** I remind delegations that the time for general statements has passed. Now we are expected to address specific subjects and specific draft resolutions.

**Ms. Eshmambetova** (Kyrgyzstan): It is a great honour to present the views of the Kyrgyz Republic on the activities of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific.

Established on 8 June 1988, the Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific pursued at the initial stage the very modest task of disseminating information on disarmament among the States of Asia and the Pacific. Its role, however, has significantly changed in the post-cold-war period, when the world has turned from nuclear expansion to nuclear reduction. There was a pressing need for an open dialogue which could promote transparency and trust among countries of the region.

In responding to this need, the Centre has offered a very valuable framework known as the "Kathmandu process", whose purpose it is to generate and sustain a dialogue on security issues in the Asia and Pacific region with a view to promoting openness, transparency and confidence-building and reaching the ultimate goal of preventing the outbreak of armed conflict and creating favourable conditions for conflict resolution.

The range of the agenda of the "Kathmandu process" is remarkably wide. It includes confidence-building measures, nuclear issues, conventional armaments, chemical and biological weapons, and various approaches to security, including new ones.

The format of the "Kathmandu process" is unique. Besides diplomats, it includes scholars and actors in the field of disarmament and security studies, policy planners and non-governmental organizations from various countries of the region. Since 1989 the Centre has held dozens of international conferences attended by hundreds of people. I was fortunate to be present at some of them, including the tenth anniversary meeting in Kathmandu from 22 to 24 February 1998, which has become a remarkable milestone in the history of the Regional Centre.

The anniversary meeting held in Nepal has conclusively shown that in the course of 10 years the Regional Centre has turned into a very important mechanism, an active facilitator of the dialogue on regional peace and disarmament. The informal atmosphere of the "Kathmandu process" contributed to free and open discussions and eventually to establishing mutual trust and cooperation in the sensitive areas of security and disarmament.

In its work the Centre is closely cooperating with the Association of South-East Asian Nations Regional Forum (ARF) and the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific (CSCAP). It is also exploring avenues for enhancing its cooperation with other subregional organizations, such as the Northeast Asia Cooperation Dialogue (NEACD) and the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO) to promote a subregional dialogue on peace and stability in the Korean Peninsula. Recently it has been actively involved in the efforts of the Central Asian States in working out a legal groundwork for the nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia, upon the request made by them in General Assembly resolution 52/38 S, adopted last year. In furtherance of these efforts, the Centre organized a series of informal meetings in New York and two expert meetings in Geneva. It also provided organizational and substantive support for the Consultative Meeting of Experts of the Central Asian States and the Nuclear-Weapon States hosted by the Kyrgyz Republic on 9 and 10 July 1998 in Bishkek. I wish to reiterate that we are sincerely grateful both to the Under-Secretary-General, Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala, and the Director of the Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, Mr. Tsutomu Ishiguri, for their invaluable assistance and support for the endeavours of the Central Asian States to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region.

However, the "Kathmandu process" cannot continue to play its important role without sound financial resources. So far it has existed entirely on generous voluntary contributions from some Governments, without any support from the United Nations budget. In our view, this very serious issue has to be addressed and solved. We should keep the "Kathmandu process" going. We need the Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Central Asia and the Pacific.

To conclude, I should like to express our readiness to continue our fruitful cooperation with the Centre.

**The Chairman** (*interpretation from French*): I remind delegations wishing to postpone the submission of draft resolutions that they are requested to inform the secretariat now. If by the end of the meeting we have received no information on this subject, we shall take it that all draft resolutions have been submitted correctly, by the deadline of 6 p.m. today.

I now call on the representative of Israel, who wishes to make a special announcement.

**Mr. Sabel** (Israel): I appreciate your giving me the opportunity to speak on a subject that is not on the Committee's agenda, Mr. Chairman.

I should like to inform the Committee that we have received information that Prime Minister Netanyahu and Chairman Arafat will shortly be signing an agreement at the White House. I believe this is very welcome news for all of us here. I wish to express on this occasion appreciation to President Clinton and the United States Government for their efforts to help achieve this agreement. I also wish to express appreciation for the leading role in the peace process played by Egypt and President Mubarak. We also appreciate the role and continued support of the European Union in this process. And finally we appreciate the personal intervention made by His Majesty King Hussein of Jordan. I know all delegations will join us here in wishing good health to King Hussein and expressing our good wishes to the people of Jordan.

**The Chairman** (*interpretation from French*): I thank the delegation of Israel for that information. It is a piece of news that cannot but cause great rejoicing among delegations in the First Committee.

Does any other delegation wish to speak this afternoon?

**Mr. Felicio** (Brazil): I should like briefly to mention two draft resolutions we will be considering this year in the First Committee.

The first is draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.2, "Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia". I wish to congratulate the delegations of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan on having presented the draft resolution and to announce that my Government has decided to co-sponsor it. We consider that the draft resolution goes in the same direction as the policy adopted by my Government on nuclear proliferation and disarmament.

I also wish to mention the draft resolution we are submitting today on a nuclear-weapon-free southern hemisphere. I should like to thank the delegations that have participated in the extensive consultations of the past few days for their flexibility and positive contribution towards reaching a text that we believe will command even wider support this year.

**The Chairman** (*interpretation from French*): As no other delegation wishes to speak, I call on the Secretary of the Committee.

**Mr. Lin Kuo-Chung** (Secretary of the Committee): So far I have received notification of only three draft resolutions for which delegations wish to extend the deadline for submission until Monday at 6 p.m. The first, entitled "Nuclear Disarmament", is sponsored by Myanmar. The second, entitled "Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world", is sponsored by Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, Slovenia, South Africa, Sweden and others. The other concerns the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD IV) and is sponsored by the non-aligned countries. That means that so far there will be only three exceptions.

**The Chairman** (*interpretation from French*): We can therefore express our gratification at the agreement arrived at yesterday. The submission of three draft resolutions is postponed until Monday. All the other draft resolutions must be handed to the secretariat before 6 p.m. today.

*The meeting rose at 3.30 p.m.*

United Nations

A/C.1/53/PV.15

# General Assembly

Fifty-third session

*Official Records*

## First Committee

## 15th Meeting

Monday, 26 October 1998, 10 a.m.
New York

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*Chairman*: Mr. Mernier ...................................... (Belgium)

*The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.*

**Agenda items 63 to 80** (*continued*)

### Thematic discussion on item subjects; introduction and consideration of all draft resolutions submitted under all items

**The Chairman** (*interpretation from French*): At this stage I should like to say how the Bureau sees this second phase of our work. Following a decision taken last year to rationalize our work, the second phase directly concerns the various draft resolutions. As Chairman, I should like to make a few suggestions.

(*spoke in English*)

We are not imposing, but would suggest that members follow last year's ranking of clusters, starting with nuclear weapons, followed by weapons of mass destruction, and then conventional weapons. That is what we are suggesting, but there is absolutely no obligation.

Because we have had a request from the floor to extend the deadline for a few draft resolutions, it will be tomorrow before we can give members an idea of the allocation of draft resolutions to clusters.

I repeat, my suggestion that we follow the clusters of last year is only that: a suggestion. Representatives who have submitted draft resolutions would start by presenting them, and then other members could comment. But first, to give members an idea of our present position, I call on the Committee Secretary.

**Mr. Cassandra** (Acting Secretary of the Committee): As of Friday, 45 draft resolutions and one amendment to a draft resolution had been submitted; that is 46 documents altogether. As of this morning all but three have been issued. The first of those three is draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.14, "Convention on the Prohibition of the Use of Nuclear Weapons", submitted by India. We are awaiting the list of sponsors, which should be in today. Next is draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.15, "Role of science and technology in the context of international security and disarmament", also submitted by India. Once again, we are awaiting the list of sponsors, and the draft resolution will be issued once we receive that list. Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.45 is also not out. Submitted by Malaysia, it is on the follow-up to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice. We are also awaiting the list of co-sponsors for that draft resolution. All the other draft resolutions have been issued and are available.

I should point out that draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.3, "Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East", has already been reissued for technical reasons.

Pending for today, based on the decision taken last week, are several draft resolutions that must be submitted by the deadline of 6 p.m. today. One is the draft resolution of the Non-Aligned Movement on the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. Another is Myanmar's draft resolution on nuclear disarmament. A third is the eight-nations' initiative draft resolution by Ireland and other sponsors. Another draft resolution we are expecting is by the United States on bilateral negotiations.

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Those four are still pending, and I have not yet received anything at all on them.

**The Chairman** (*interpretation from French*): I should like to thank all delegations for complying with the spirit of the agreement reached on Friday on the submission of draft resolutions. It has worked very well, and I believe we can continue on the same lines.

**Mr. Santos** (Mozambique): Allow me to take this opportunity to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee. My delegation wants to assure you of its full support and cooperation in the fulfilment of the responsibilities entrusted to you and to the other members of the Bureau. We are convinced that under your guidance the work of the First Committee will move along its desired course and come to successful conclusions.

I should also like to use this opportunity to thank your predecessor, Mr. Nkgowe, from our sister country, Botswana. His knowledge of the issues, firm guidance and diplomatic skills led us to the successful conclusion of the First Committee at the fifty-second session.

Even though arms control has traditionally focused on conventional arms and weapons of mass destruction, the devastation wrought by the proliferation of light weapons and small arms on socio-economic development generally, and specifically on the reconstruction of post-conflict societies, can no longer be ignored. The illicit traffic in, and accumulation, use and proliferation of, small arms and light weapons constitute a serious threat to national and regional security. They contribute to aggravating tensions that lead to internal conflict and increase crime, violence, banditry and civil disobedience, not only in the affected countries but also in neighbouring countries.

In this regard, my delegation would like to share with the Committee some humble suggestions aimed at reversing this trend and ensuring that national and regional security are safeguarded. The international community should promote and ensure an exchange of national and subregional experiences in the collection, control and disposal of small arms and light weapons. Programmes for the reintegration of demobilized former combatants into civil society and the end of armed conflict, including the legal framework for reducing the excessive accumulation and transfer of small arms and light weapons, should be established under the guidance of the United Nations. The United Nations should include the collection of all kinds of weapons, particularly small arms and light weapons, as an integral part of peace processes and peace accords where the international community is involved in putting an end to armed conflict and in consolidating peace processes to prevent its re-emergence.

An illustrative example of such issues would be the retrieval, storage and safeguarding of small arms and light weapons belonging to demobilized personnel and the destruction of arms and their respective ammunition. In affected regions, States and regional organizations should also take immediate steps to stop the inflow of small arms and light weapons, through increased cooperation, the harmonization of transfer procedures, tighter border control and intelligence-sharing. Because children are an easy conduit for the illicit transfer and use of small arms, special attention should be paid to this vulnerable group. Governments should harness the support and encourage the initiative of civil society.

My country has been following with great interest, and participating in, the work of the United Nations Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms and has taken part in various events and initiatives related to that issue. My country recognizes, therefore, that the work done by this Panel will constitute a major step forward in preparation for the international conference on the illicit arms trade in all its aspects, which will enable Governments and regional organizations to share their experiences and facilitate dialogue. We are of the opinion that the decision to convene the international conference should be taken at the present session, and that the decision on its objective, scope and timing should be taken by the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session, after broad consultations.

The Southern African Development Community (SADC), to which my country belongs, is already making joint efforts to pool relevant intelligence information, police activity and customs controls in order to detect the illicit transboundary movement of small arms and light weapons and apprehend those involved, and to combat arms smuggling, money laundering, stock stealing, drug trafficking and vehicle theft, and to harmonize national legislation in order to ensure that criminals escaping from justice in a country with stringent laws do not find shelter in our region. We are equally encouraged by initiatives in other subregions of our continent.

Let me once again reiterate the offer made on 22 September 1998 in the General Assembly by my Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation to host the first meeting of States parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel

Mines and on Their Destruction. Allow me to pay my Government's tribute to Canada for its pioneering role on this issue and to the international community for the trust placed in my country to host such a conference. Allow me also to take this opportunity to express my Government's deep gratitude and appreciation to the evolving role of those whom we call the Friends of Maputo in the preparation of the first meeting of States parties. They are members of this Committee who, from the outset, have indicated their willingness to assist in preparing for the hosting of such a conference. I should also like to mention your personal commitment, Mr. Chairman, to the conference.

We are delighted to report that the consultations on preparations for the Maputo meeting are being carried out with a view to facilitating the smooth holding of the conference. It is our hope that this ministerial level meeting in Maputo will result in the adoption of meaningful recommendations to address, in a comprehensive manner, the issue of anti-personnel landmines, particularly with regard to international cooperation and assistance, and other relevant issues envisaged by this important instrument of international law. The diffusion of existing stocks and the flow of new anti-personnel mines, which endanger the reconstruction of poor, post-conflict societies, including my own country, should be adequately addressed.

This event should also serve as a mine-action forum with the aim of mobilizing support for mine-clearance activities and victim assistance, thus enhancing the challenge of removing anti-personnel mines placed throughout the world, ensuring their destruction and creating a sound environment for development. In this endeavour we should gather the support of all actors at governmental and non-governmental levels. We are encouraged by the support so far expressed by numerous delegations in co-sponsoring the draft resolution on this issue, and we look forward to the participation of all States parties in the preparation process.

Finally, our success in tackling the Ottawa Convention issues will depend on the manner in which we can accommodate our individual and collective interests. Let us work together to ensure the attainment of these objectives and enable sustainable development in mine-affected countries.

**The Chairman** (*interpretation from French*): The First Committee welcomes Mozambique's decision to agree to holding in Maputo this first conference of States parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. On behalf of the Committee, and on my own behalf, I wish to thank Mozambique for that decision and to assure it of our support for the success of this very symbolic conference.

There are no further speakers for this meeting. Before adjourning I remind members that last week we distributed a draft rearrangement of the Committee's agenda. We intend to hold the first meeting on this matter on Thursday morning at 11 a.m.

(*spoke in English*)

I encourage all delegations interested in this subject to prepare their comments. We intend to proceed in as orderly a manner as possible: first, on the name of the clustering; secondly, on the order of the clustering; and then on the content of each cluster.

(*spoke in French*)

Tomorrow morning the secretariat will give the Committee an idea of the distribution by cluster of all the draft resolutions, once they have all been submitted. I remind members that the last deadline for their submission is this evening at 6 p.m.

After this meeting only six meetings remain for the discussion of draft resolutions — the last being on Monday afternoon.

*The meeting rose at 10.25 a.m.*

United Nations

A/C.1/53/PV.16

General Assembly
Fifty-third Session

*Official Records*

First Committee
16th Meeting
Tuesday, 27 October 1998, 3 p.m.
New York

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*Chairman*: Mr. Mernier . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . (Belgium)

*The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.*

**Agenda items 63 to 80** *(continued)*

## Thematic discussion on item subjects; introduction and consideration of all draft resolutions submitted under all items

**The Chairman:** Yesterday I asked delegations to use the clusters from last year as an informal guideline for the thematic discussion and introduction of draft resolutions over the next six meetings scheduled for this stage of the Committee's work. For the Committee's guidance I have circulated today an informal paper clustering the draft resolutions submitted this year.

I should like to underline again that I am not suggesting a formal structure for the discussion or introduction of draft resolutions. Any delegation may address any item or introduce any draft resolution at any time during the course of this second stage of our work.

As to the suggested clusters for draft resolutions for the first part of the next stage of our work, action on all draft resolutions, I should like delegations to treat the paper I have circulated today as the Chair's preliminary proposal. I request delegations to address their comments on the clusters to a member of the Bureau of their respective regions as soon as possible so that I can take them into account for a formal submission of the cluster paper on Thursday, 29 October, in the afternoon.

As to the Chairman's non-paper that I circulated on 22 October on the rearrangement of agenda items, I propose that the Committee meet informally on Thursday, 29 October, following the adjournment of its formal afternoon meeting. I expect comments on three subjects — whether there should be titles of headings; their wording; and the agenda items under the headings.

I now call on the Committee Secretary to say a few words about the status of draft resolutions.

**Mr. Lin Kuo-chung** (Secretary of the Committee): Almost all the draft resolutions submitted before Friday are available; draft resolutions A/C.1/53/L.14, L.15, L.16, L.47 and L.48 are now at the documents counter. There are only three pending draft resolutions: A/C.1/53/L.45, L.49 and L.50. Those three will be available tomorrow morning.

**The Chairman:** As no delegation wishes to comment on the organization of work, I call on the first speaker on my list, the representative of Ireland, to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.48.

**Mr. Macfhionnbhairr** (Ireland): I wish to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.48, entitled: "Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: the need for a new agenda", on behalf of the delegations of Benin, Botswana, Brazil, Cameroon, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Guatemala, Ireland, Lesotho, Liberia, Malaysia, Mali, Mexico, New Zealand, Nigeria, Peru, Samoa, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Swaziland, Sweden, Thailand, Togo, Uruguay and Venezuela.

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The purpose of this draft resolution is to revitalize the way in which we approach the nuclear disarmament agenda. Its intention is to galvanize the international community in common action for the purpose of eradicating these weapons once and for all. It is the prerogative and duty of the membership of the United Nations gathered in the General Assembly to examine and to express the will of the international community on issues of such importance to humanity.

Enacting the proposals contained in this draft will have far-reaching consequences — for the nuclear-weapon States, for those States that have not joined the international community in relinquishing the option to develop nuclear weapons and for the international community as a whole, which has the responsibility to bring about the multilateral, non-discriminatory and universal regime for a nuclear-weapon-free world.

The draft resolution proposes an agenda, or the contours of an agenda, but does not presume to supplant other draft resolutions on nuclear disarmament before the Committee. It offers a way forward that is contingent on the demonstration of an unequivocal commitment by the nuclear-weapon States to approach their responsibilities with regard to nuclear disarmament from a novel perspective, namely, the speedy and total elimination of their respective nuclear arsenals. It calls upon them to demonstrate such an undertaking. Without it we face the prospect of the continued existence and indefinite retention of nuclear weapons.

This draft resolution charts an agenda which in broad terms can, and indeed must, be addressed if the international community is seriously to grapple with the elimination of nuclear weapons. The agenda focuses on the need to use existing mechanisms and approaches. It provides the balance between bilateral, plurilateral and multilateral approaches, each of which in its own respect can and must contribute to the pursuit and achievement of nuclear disarmament.

The effects of following the approach set out in this draft resolution would be decisive. These weapons would rapidly be relegated as anachronisms which remain a threat only insofar as the process of their destruction requires cautious handling in conditions of security to be elaborated between the nuclear-weapon States.

The threat of proliferation, which will always remain a concern in a world of nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States, will ease as a result.

The consequences of ignoring the urgency of speedily and totally eliminating nuclear weapons was borne in on us earlier this year. Let these events be the defining catalyst for us all to act together now. The draft resolution provides the outline of a plan of action. The details of this, as of any plan, can be changed. Timetables can be set. New and alternative approaches can be examined. All these things we can do. We can do little, however, until the nuclear-weapon States have demonstrated an unequivocal commitment to the speedy and total elimination of their nuclear arsenals, to be followed by a new level of engagement in those negotiations, which are a first and integral part of the process leading to nuclear disarmament.

In the draft resolution the sponsors attempt, with a reasonable proposal that builds upon existing, legally binding commitments by the nuclear-weapon States, to secure the final push towards the realization of the article VI provisions of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), thereby enabling the international community to fulfil the goals of the Treaty as a whole.

I wish to respond to a number of criticisms that have been levelled at the draft resolution by a number of delegations. It is claimed that statements made by the sponsors indicate that they are not prepared to consider changes that would make the draft resolution acceptable. In response, the sponsors, who have laboured solidly since the 9 June 1998 joint ministerial declaration on nuclear disarmament (A/53/138) to elaborate a draft resolution that would have the overwhelming support of the international community, have engaged all delegations that have been willing to work with them, and a large number of delegations have engaged in such a dialogue. The sponsors have accordingly amended many paragraphs in the original text to accommodate the concerns of delegations. The sponsors have invited the five nuclear-weapon States to engage in a dialogue on this text.

It is argued that the text presents dangerous new concepts, such as nuclear-weapons-capable States. In response, the Ministers in the 9 June 1998 joint declaration were specific as to the States which were covered by this term, namely, Israel, India and Pakistan. However, to further avoid any possible misapprehension, the sponsors have moved the reference to nuclear-weapons capability after the reference to States, lest there be any suggestion that the sponsors were attempting to create a new status of nuclear-weapons-capable States. The text therefore reads, in the sixth preambular paragraph: "States that are nuclear-weapons capable and that have not acceded to the NPT". There are only three such non-NPT States.

It is further argued that the text does particular harm by reformulating agreed language on a fissile material cut-off treaty in a way that could prejudge the negotiations. In response I wish to say that early drafts of the draft resolution used a formula for the fissile material treaty which was generic and which could not be misconstrued, as there is agreement in the Conference on Disarmament, a body which proceeds by consensus, on the mandate for these treaty negotiations. However, as a number of delegations preferred the text of the full mandate, the text of the draft resolution has been amended accordingly.

It is argued that at a time when the international community has raised serious concerns about the Indian and Pakistani nuclear tests, the draft resolution makes no reference to them and thereby lends aid and comfort to India and Pakistan; that it rewards India and Pakistan for testing; and that it is not in accordance with Security Council resolution 1172 (1998).

The response to that is that there is another draft resolution before the Committee specifically dealing with nuclear testing. The origins of our draft resolution are in a joint ministerial declaration that was in preparation well in advance of recent tests.

The goals of the draft resolution are universal. They are forward-looking and were as relevant before as they are after the recent nuclear tests. This is a proposal for a new agenda, not a response to action taken by certain States. The sponsors' purpose is to focus on actions that are required now. The urgency of immediate action to eliminate nuclear weapons has, however, been heightened by the recent tests.

It is argued that the draft resolution does not acknowledge the threat posed by those States parties to the NPT that do not live up to their obligations under that Treaty. The answer to that is that this draft resolution is a call for an agenda. The draft resolution (A/53/L.18) on the report of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), before the plenary meeting of the General Assembly, considers questions of compliance with safeguards agreements concluded in fulfilment of obligations under articles II and III of the NPT. The Security Council is also apprised of questions relating to proliferation.

It is argued that the draft, by implicitly rejecting the agenda contained in the principles and objectives agreed at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference, also tends to undermine the international non-proliferation regime.

The agenda set by the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the NPT includes the negotiation of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), since concluded; the fissile treaty negotiations, about to begin; and negative security assurances, also under consideration. Our draft calls for the signature or ratification, as appropriate, of the first — paragraph 10; the determined pursuit of the second — paragraph 12; and the conclusion of negotiations on the third — paragraph 17.

The purpose of the draft resolution is to reignite the pursuit of nuclear disarmament, phrased at all times in conformity with the principles and objectives of the NPT and with any decisions or resolutions adopted by the parties to that Treaty. In operative paragraph 15 the draft resolution underlines the importance both of the agenda and the review process set out at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference. The entire draft resolution is informed by the sponsors' unequivocal commitment to the NPT and its full implementation.

It is argued that a negative vote is required on this draft resolution to send a sufficiently strong signal that initiatives likely to undermine the global non-proliferation regime are unacceptable. In response, I wish to say that the sponsors of the draft resolution, delegations representing non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT, are acting here to protect the NPT, including its non-proliferation provisions. This agenda is an approach which, if adopted by all delegations, would reinforce those provisions.

The text of my statement is being circulated, with an explanatory note on the draft resolution, paragraph by paragraph.

Finally, I should like to reiterate on behalf of the sponsors of the draft resolution that we are in dialogue with a large number of States, and we invite others to contact us so that consideration can be given to their concerns.

**Mr. Paturej** (Poland): Since I am speaking in the First Committee for the first time, let me congratulate you, Sir, on your excellent chairmanship and timely commencement of our deliberations. I pledge my full support for your work at this crucial final stage of our deliberations.

I have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.38/Rev.1, "Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction", sponsored by Canada and Poland.

The initial draft resolution was subject to short but intensive open-ended, private consultations last week, with the participation of all interested delegations. The majority of delegations fully supported the initial draft. Some, however, while expressing general support for the draft required additional consultations and proposed some changes.

On 23 October there was an informal open-ended meeting, with the participation of many delegations, followed by a series of individual consultations. The draft submitted to the Secretariat is a result of these meetings and intensive consultations.

This year's draft resolution is based on last year's, which was adopted without a vote. There is, however, an important difference. For the first time the title of the draft resolution is "Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction". We are no longer discussing the Convention's status. This change means that for the first time the draft resolution is entirely devoted to the issue of the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention. The new character of the draft resolution has been reflected in its operative part.

I must stress that to prepare a draft resolution that would be supported by the majority of delegations, if not all, was not an easy task. First, the Chemical Weapons Convention has already been implemented, but only for 18 months. While many tasks have been completed and we are gaining more and more experience in the implementation of all the provisions of the Convention, that experience is still limited.

Secondly, there was a clear need to reflect the implementation in its entirety. That is why, rather than pointing out particular elements or issues stemming from the implementation, we have tried to stress the importance of all the provisions of the Treaty. As a result, the draft repeats all the important elements of last year's resolution, which remain crucial to the success of the Chemical Weapons Convention. The preambular paragraphs of the draft resolution remain the same. In paragraph 5 the Assembly would repeat "the necessity of universal adherence to the Convention, and call upon all States that have not yet done so to become States parties to the Convention without delay". In paragraph 6 it would stress "the importance ... that all possessors of chemical weapons, chemical weapons production facilities or chemical weapons development facilities, including previously declared possessor States, should be among the States parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention" and welcome progress to that end.

All States parties would be urged, in paragraph 4, "to meet in full and timely their obligations under the Convention and to support the Organization [for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)] in its implementation activities".

At the same time the draft resolution contains new language which reflects the new state of implementation activities; the General Assembly would, in paragraph 1, note with appreciation "the ongoing work of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons to achieve the object and purpose of the Convention, to ensure the full implementation of its provisions, including those for international verification of compliance with it, and to provide a forum for consultation and cooperation among States Parties".

In paragraph 2 the importance of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons would be stressed "in verifying compliance with all the provisions of the Convention as well as promoting timely and efficient accomplishment of all its objectives". I must stress that the new language in paragraphs 1 and 2 is taken entirely from the text of the Convention, specifically, from article VIII, paragraph 1.

At the same time, the draft resolution would welcome the emerging cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and encourage efforts towards the prompt conclusion of a relationship agreement between the United Nations and the OPCW.

We decided to remain the only sponsors of the draft resolution on the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention. As has already been stressed, this draft resolution is very short and concise. Any additions to it would endanger the existing balance. There are 120 States parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention. Limited co-sponsorship would mean that only these States parties associated themselves with the draft by co-sponsoring it. Our ultimate goal is to have in forthcoming years the co-sponsorship of all States that have become States parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention.

On behalf of Canada and Poland, I express the hope that the draft resolution will be adopted without a vote, as was the case with last year's draft resolution.

I wish to stress the good atmosphere and extremely positive attitude and approach of all delegations that participated in the consultations, especially in the last fine tuning. This positive atmosphere and readiness to work in a spirit of cooperation went beyond national and group positions and created a sound basis for the speedy conclusion of the drafting exercise.

I should like to highlight a few changes made during recent consultations. "All" has been removed from the middle of paragraph 2, because it was stressed that the OPCW is not verifying compliance with all the provisions of the Convention, since not all of them are verifiable. Moreover, as I have said, paragraphs 1 and 2 reflect entirely the text of the Convention, and "all" does not appear in article VIII, paragraph 1.

New language has been introduced at the end of paragraph 7: ", in accordance with the Convention".

I hope that the changes made will allow the revised draft resolution to be adopted by consensus.

**Mr. Pearson** (New Zealand): I have the honour to introduce on behalf of Mexico, Australia and New Zealand draft resolution, A/C.1/53/L.11, entitled "Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty".

Just over two years ago the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) was adopted by the General Assembly and opened for signature. Today there are 150 signatories, 21 of which have ratified. Among the signatories are the five nuclear-weapon States, and among the ratifiers are the United Kingdom and France.

The CTBT Preparatory Commission and its provisional Technical Secretariat are now well-established and making good progress towards the establishment of the global verification system. It is clear from national statements made earlier this session that there is the broadest possible support for this Treaty.

While the General Assembly last year made no pronouncement on the status of the CTBT's implementation, it agreed to include this item on our agenda. The sponsors believe that it is appropriate this year for the First Committee to record its appreciation of the extent to which this Treaty has commanded international support and commitment and to encourage the necessary continuing commitment and support that will bring it into force: hence this draft resolution.

The draft resolution is straightforward. It has a single practical focus: to encourage further signature and ratification of the Treaty so as to promote early entry into force and the achievement of universal adherence. In short, this is a draft resolution which its three sponsors hope will attract the support of all members of the Committee. Its adoption without a vote would be the best contribution the Committee could make to the momentum for the CTBT's entry into force and a permanent end to the nuclear testing it bans.

**Mr. Enkhsaikhan** (Mongolia): In this second phase of the First Committee's work, the thematic discussion, my delegation would like to touch upon a subject that in its view is very important, namely, promoting nuclear disarmament and the role of individual States, including small States.

As I pointed out in my earlier intervention, promoting disarmament and international security are not exclusive prerogatives of the big and the powerful. The role of medium, big and small States should not be underestimated. They are playing, collectively or individually, a more active role in the disarmament and confidence-building processes. One such area is of course nuclear disarmament. Though these States do not possess nuclear weapons, they could play a more active and positive role, either collectively or otherwise, in promoting nuclear disarmament. Therefore, the international community, including the United Nations, should encourage and support them in every possible way.

Today more than half the world is covered by a network of nuclear-weapon-free zones, both operating and emerging, as a result of the Antarctic Treaty, and the Treaties of Rarotonga, Bangkok, Tlatelolco and Pelindaba. A positive chance to create additional nuclear-weapon-free zones should be further encouraged in every way in the spirit of the decision of the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

It is in this spirit that Mongolia welcomes and supports the efforts of the Central Asian States to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in their subregion, and believes that the recent consultative meeting in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, was instrumental in providing the opportunity for the States of the subregion and nuclear-weapon States to exchange views on the basic elements of the future treaty. It is our hope that the Central Asia nuclear-weapon-free zone will be created before the year 2000. Bearing in mind the importance of the Middle East, we believe that that region should also be turned into a nuclear-weapon-free zone and that pending the creation of such a zone all the States of the region should refrain, on a reciprocal basis, from producing, acquiring or in any other way possessing nuclear weapons and should make other appropriate commitments and take practical steps in this further direction. Likewise, Mongolia supports the proposal to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South Asia, duly reflecting, of course, the existing realities.

My delegation believes that even if those nuclear-weapon-free zones are created there are still other subregions, including some in Europe, as well as many individual States, that could also opt for creating nuclear-weapon-free zones or otherwise acquiring other forms of nuclear-weapon-free status, depending, of course, on the specific regional or subregional characteristics and the security concerns of those and other States involved.

My country, Mongolia, is an example. Because of its geographical location, it does not border on any third country except two nuclear-weapon States, with all the ensuing geopolitical realities and complexities this involves, including even the safety of their nuclear installations. Having been fully dependent on one side in the Sino-Soviet dispute, it sided with that Power, forming in fact its forward base against the other, incurring thus — logically — political, military and other forms of pressure from the other Power. The potential danger of an outbreak of conflict on its territory was constantly hanging over it, and Mongolia itself had no control over that situation.

It was for that reason, and driven by the desire to contribute to the cause of the promotion of nuclear disarmament in the post-cold-war period that in 1992 Mongolia declared its territory a nuclear-weapon-free zone. The initiative enjoys widespread international support, as reflected in the Final Document of the twelfth summit of the Non-Aligned Movement, and in the support of its two neighbours and other nuclear-weapon States. However, when it comes to the question of the actual creation of such a zone, the hitherto accepted formula does not seem to be fully applicable. There are many reasons. One is that Mongolia stands alone in creating such a zone. In this respect it is in fact a pioneering State, since no State has acquired single-State nuclear-weapon-free status. Moreover, at this stage the nuclear-weapon States have difficulties in accepting the notion of single-State zones, although many States are voicing their support for such zones.

Another reason is that Mongolia stands between two nuclear-weapon States, thus directly affecting their interests.

A third reason is that nuclear security for Mongolia, however important, is but one of the essential elements of world security. Today, when its relations with its two neighbours are good and cooperative, the nuclear-weapon-free status serves more as an additional factor of stability and predictability than a pre-emptive policy. Logically, this in fact in itself should be conducive to genuine and constructive cooperation.

Last but not least, for a small State such as Mongolia, nuclear-weapon-free status would be stronger if its overall security were ensured.

My delegation has been conducting consultations on this matter with the States concerned since the summer of 1997. In the course of those consultations the above specific features of Mongolia have been well understood and recognized by all sides concerned. At this stage we believe that in itself is a big achievement. However, much has still to be done. But we are optimists; we believe that once there is such an understanding, with necessary political will we will be able to arrive quite soon at some arrangement that could accommodate the particular needs and interests of Mongolia, including a strengthening of its nuclear-weapon-free status, the legitimate interests of its neighbours, and the interests and stability of the region in general.

Since we enjoy good-neighbourly relations with the two neighbours, we believe that our arrangement could be looked at more as an insurance policy than a form of pre-emptive diplomacy. It is expected to strengthen both our international security and the nuclear-weapon-free status.

Moreover, mindful of the role and importance of our two neighbours, not only in the region but also in the world, we believe that the future arrangement could be of tremendous importance for international peace and security. Thus, it could in the long run form the basis of an important factor in strengthening stability and predictability in this subregion, and even perhaps form part of a wider regional network of arrangements connected with North-East Asia, Central Asia or even perhaps the Association of South-East Asian Nations Regional Forum (ARF).

We believe that the United Nations, its appropriate departments and disarmament centres, with their wealth of experience, could play a positive role in this endeavour. We look forward to such cooperation. Bearing in mind the quite advanced stage of negotiations on Mongolia's initiative, my delegation, in cooperation with some others, has submitted draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.10, which will be introduced in the Committee in due time.

**Mr. Sulaiman** (Nigeria): I have the honour of introducing three draft resolutions.

It is my pleasure on behalf of the African Group to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.9, "Prohibition of the dumping of radioactive wastes". A similar draft resolution was first introduced during the General Assembly's forty-third session, in 1988. At that time many doubted its relevance to our work. Nevertheless, concern over the 1986 accident at Chernobyl has led to international cooperation in addressing nuclear subjects, including management of nuclear wastes.

In this connection, we welcome the adoption at Vienna on 5 September 1997 of the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management, as recommended by the Moscow Summit on Nuclear Safety and Security. We therefore appeal to all States to sign and subsequently to ratify this Convention so that it may enter into force as soon as possible. We also welcome the entry into force of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Convention on Nuclear Safety, which complements and reinforces the existing instruments on the handling of radioactive wastes, such as the Bamako Convention for the African region, the London Convention against the dumping of waste at sea, the Convention for the South Pacific region and the IAEA Code of Practice on the International Transboundary Movement of Radioactive Waste.

The draft resolution, whose text is the same as in former years, has always been adopted by consensus.

I also have the honour, again on behalf of the African Group, to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.8, "United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa".

The United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa was established in 1986 by General Assembly resolution 42/151 G of 16 December 1985. The Centre, located in Lomé, is charged with providing upon request substantive support for initiatives and other efforts of member States towards the realization of measures of peace, arms limitation and disarmament in the region, in cooperation with the Organization of African Unity (OAU), and with coordinating the implementation of regional activities in Africa under the United Nations disarmament programme.

The Centre, despite severe financial constraints, continues to fulfil its mandate by conducting and contributing to efforts to promote wider understanding and cooperation among African States in the areas of peace, disarmament and security.

The Centre has been without a substantive Director since July 1992. We therefore reiterate our call for the appointment of an experienced Lomé-based Director, provided with all the necessary support to revitalize its activities. We also appeal to Member States, as well as to international organizations and foundations, to make voluntary contributions towards revitalizing the Centre's programme of activities. In the same vein, we also express our gratitude to the Governments of Norway and Togo, and to the United Nations, for their valuable contributions towards the sustenance of the Centre.

It is our conviction that this draft resolution will, as has been usual with similar draft resolutions in past years, be adopted by consensus.

I should now like to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.29, "United Nations disarmament fellowship training and advisory services", on behalf of the following sponsors: Algeria, Benin, Brazil, China, Cuba, Egypt, Germany, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Japan, Myanmar, Nicaragua, the Niger, Pakistan and South Africa, as well as Nigeria.

The year 1998 marks the twentieth anniversary of the United Nations disarmament fellowship training and advisory services. The objectives of the fellowship training programme are varied; they include providing young diplomats with a general background in disarmament and security-related issues, enabling them to gain confidence in discussing disarmament issues, built on their knowledge and understanding, as well as allowing them to improve their negotiating skills while familiarizing themselves with the procedures and practices of disarmament negotiating and deliberating bodies.

In the 20 years of its existence the programme has trained about 500 officials, mostly from developing countries. Many of them are today in positions of responsibility in the field of disarmament in their various Governments.

The records also show that a number of developing countries are finding the programme appropriate and useful for their young diplomats. Indeed, this goes a long way towards proving its relevance to the entire membership and agenda of the United Nations. In the light of its relevance, therefore, we appeal to Member States to continue to accord the programme the support and assistance it needs in order to increase the number of fellows trained annually to the level of the mandate of the Concluding Document of the twelfth special session of the General Assembly, the second special session devoted to disarmament. This will also make the course content and direction worthy of its name and of the high standard that has been its benchmark since its inception in 1979.

The draft resolution is essentially similar to draft resolutions of previous years. The third preambular paragraph notes with satisfaction that the programme has trained a number of public officials selected from all the geographical regions represented in the United Nations system, in developing greater expertise in disarmament and a better understanding of the concerns of the international community in the field of disarmament and security.

In its operative paragraphs the draft resolution reaffirms the relevant decisions of the programme, as contained in annex IV of the Concluding Document of the twelfth special session, and expresses appreciation to the Governments of Member States, particularly those of Germany and Japan, for inviting the 1997 and 1998 fellows to study selected activities in the field of disarmament, thereby contributing to the fulfilment of the overall objectives of the programme.

The Nigerian delegation wishes to seize this opportunity to express its deep gratitude to the Secretary-General and the Department for Disarmament Affairs for their continued support. Nonetheless, the support of all Member States is required to enable the training programme to continue to achieve its important objectives.

It is the hope of the sponsors of the draft resolution that it will be adopted by consensus, as similar draft resolutions in previous years have been adopted.

**Mr. Tauwhare** (United Kingdom): First, may I apologize on behalf of Ambassador Soutar, who had intended to speak this afternoon. He has, I fear, been afflicted by a particularly virulent New York bug and — temporarily, I hope — has lost his voice, and so has asked me to speak in his stead.

I want to respond to the representative of Ireland, who introduced draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.48, on a new agenda for nuclear disarmament. In particular, we have taken careful note of the amendments that have been made to earlier drafts of the draft resolution. While these are welcome, I have to express our regret that they still fall some way short of meeting the United Kingdom's concerns. As a result, we have been forced to conclude that we cannot support this draft, and we intend to vote against it. We wanted to take this opportunity to make clear our reasons for this, before we are faced with having to present a formal explanation of vote, in the hope that the sponsors of the draft resolution will reconsider.

Let me set out briefly five particular concerns that we have with regard to the draft resolution. First, it fails, in our view, to recognize the repeated commitment made by the nuclear-weapon States to the goal of nuclear disarmament, and the practical steps taken by them towards that goal. The United Kingdom is wholly committed to nuclear disarmament and to its obligations under article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). We have made it clear that when satisfied with progress towards this goal we will ensure that our remaining nuclear weapons are included in multilateral negotiations. Our commitment has regularly been given practical expression, most recently by the measures undertaken in our strategic defence review, which included significant reductions in, and unprecedented transparency about, our nuclear deterrent.

In particular, I would point out the following features of our review: overall, the United Kingdom will maintain fewer than 200 operationally available nuclear warheads, compared with the previously announced ceiling of 300; a Trident submarine on deterrent patrol will carry only 48 warheads, compared with the previously announced ceiling of 96; only one of our four Trident submarines will be on deterrent patrol at any one time, and this submarine's missiles will not be targeted and will routinely be at a notice to fire measured in days,compared with the few minutes' quick-reaction alert sustained during the cold war.

We have also published detailed figures for our defence stocks of fissile material. We are taking steps to put over 50 per cent of our unsafeguarded stocks of plutonium under safeguards. We made it clear back in April 1995 that we had ceased production of such materials for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. All reprocessing and enrichment operations in the United Kingdom will now take place under international safeguards, thereby effectively already meeting what will undoubtedly be one of the main verification requirements of the fissile material cut-off treaty.

Secondly, the draft resolution implicitly rejects the agenda on the next steps towards nuclear disarmament, which was agreed by consensus by the States parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference and is contained in the principles and objectives document. We remain firmly committed to this agenda and fear that casting it aside, as the draft resolution does, would serve to undermine the international non-proliferation regime. We believe we can best make progress towards nuclear disarmament by practical steps, particularly those set out in the NPT principles and objectives.

The first such step, the conclusion of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) has been achieved. We are now working for its early entry into force; the United Kingdom has ratified it, and looks to others that have not yet done so to follow suit.

The next step identified by the NPT States parties is the negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty. We have warmly welcomed the long overdue start of such negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament and are committed to working hard to secure their successful conclusion.

Thirdly, the draft resolution advocates measures which we on a national basis examined carefully in the context of our strategic defence review, and concluded that they would be at the present time inconsistent with the maintenance of a credible minimum nuclear deterrent.

Fourthly, we find it extraordinary that the draft resolution makes no mention — let alone condemns — the recent nuclear tests by India and Pakistan. It is difficult to see how this failure can be reconciled with the provisions of Security Council resolution 1172 (1998) on those tests. In our view, this failure also serves to undermine the non-proliferation regime.

Finally, the draft resolution fails to acknowledge the threat posed by those States parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty that do not comply with their obligations under that Treaty.

The United Kingdom remains ready to support any measure that will make a practical contribution to advancing nuclear disarmament. On a national basis, we believe that we have made significant movement in that direction. Multilaterally, the agenda and priorities are already clear. This draft resolution undermines that agenda and undermines the non-proliferation regimes. We therefore cannot support it, and would ask the sponsors to take these comments into consideration.

**Mrs. Burgois** (France) (*interpretation from French*): I had not intended to speak today, but I feel I must respond to the introduction by the representative of Ireland of the draft resolution on the new agenda for nuclear disarmament. I listened with much interest and even with a degree of sympathy. Many eminent researchers, experts and important non-governmental organizations have wondered what could be done, in addition to the 1995 programme and until the fissile materials cut-off negotiations are launched, to prevent a loss of momentum in the accelerating trend towards disarmament that we have noted in recent years.

I understand, therefore, the reasons behind the draft resolution, but it is perhaps a little too soon or a little too late. Three questions come to mind. First, is the statement concerning the shortcomings of the nuclear disarmament process well founded? Secondly, is the proposed agenda for nuclear disarmament realistic? Thirdly, is the presentation of the draft resolution timely? The reply of my delegation to all three questions is "No".

Have the shortcomings been correctly assessed? I do not think so, because that would mean ignoring both the progress made in the overall reduction of arsenals and the many phases already passed at the multilateral level. With regard to the first, no one can deny the importance of the process engaged in by the United States of America and the Russian Federation. It is true that there remain a number of important stages to be implemented — particularly the ratification of START II and the launching of negotiations on START III, which today seem rather uncertain — but it is precisely because their achievement is crucial that we should not place them in jeopardy by casting doubt on them.

From a unilateral perspective, I listened with interest to the statement made by the representative of the United Kingdom. I think I could make a statement on behalf of France very much along the same lines. I will spare the Committee the details today, but I believe the unilateral efforts made by France over a number of years have been truly significant and require an expensive update every few years, something that cannot be expected of a Government.

Still at the unilateral level, my country's efforts have, first, brought about a reduction in the number of nuclear weapons. I shall not recall the history of this process, but simply remind members of the decisions announced in 1996 by the President of the French Republic that resulted in the elimination of the land component of our deterrent force and the adjustment to a sufficient level — the lowest possible level — of the naval and air components. It is appropriate to recall at this point also, since the matter is raised in the draft resolution introduced by Ireland, that France does not have tactical nuclear weapons.

Next, because this seems to be a fashionable topic, I wish to recall the efforts made to reduce our alert status at different stages as the international situation developed, beginning in 1992, with further reductions later; very recently the President of the Republic was able to state that French nuclear weapons were no longer targeted.

Another example concerns not arms but fissile materials: the halting in 1992 of plutonium production for weapons and in 1996 of the production of highly enriched uranium. These facts are well known, and it might be said that there is no point in bringing them up once again, since other nuclear Powers have also announced that they have ceased production. The difference — which I would like to emphasize — is that France took the risk of adopting irreversible measures by dismantling its production facilities, a process now under way at Marcoule and Pierrelatte. Those are the facts.

As regards unilateral measures, I do not think this Committee has forgotten any more than I have the name of Mururoa, which is my third example. Today Mururoa, our test site in the Pacific, is closed. From 30 June to 3 July this year the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) held in Vienna an international conference on the radiological situation on atolls, at which the outcome of the study conducted since 1996 was examined by the international community. The study concluded that there had been no impact on human health or the environment as a result of radiation from residual radioactive material. I should like to highlight the exceptional nature of our initiative. The installations constructed for testing purposes have been dismantled. The whole dismantling operation at Mururoa and Fangataufa will be concluded this year. France is now the only nuclear Power that no longer has a test site.

In fact, both bilateral and unilateral efforts to reduce arsenals contradict the assertion of shortcomings implicit in the draft resolution. That is also true of multilateral efforts. I hardly need recall the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, which France has signed and ratified and which we of course want to see enter into force. We therefore hope that in 1999 it will be possible to review the situation and accelerate ratification by States that have signed but not yet ratified, as well as by States that have not yet joined us in the club of signatories.

Above all, at the multilateral level the international community has just entered into the negotiation of a multilateral instrument essential for both non-proliferation and disarmament, known as the fissile material cut-off treaty. That may be one reason for the draft resolution. Perhaps we do not yet realize, because it is so recent, the impact of this change and the heavy responsibility on us to carry out the negotiations successfully. We are at a new stage, which changes perspectives and explains my country's doubts about a new agenda, the purpose of the draft resolution, when we have still not exhausted our 1995 agenda. If the allegation of shortcomings is not well founded, neither is the agenda, because it ignores the facts I have set out and mixes all types of situations and approaches. It takes for granted the success of the cut-off negotiations, which have barely started and which require tremendous efforts, both political and technical, to accommodate the various positions. It combines different situations, such as the commitments assumed by the nuclear Powers and the problem of States, whether or not parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), that are nuclear-weapons capable. This new agenda tries to reconcile the so-called abolitionist approach and the gradual approach — which is the only realistic one.

Therefore, the proposed new agenda does not seem to be a practical measure that can be effectively implemented.

My third question was whether this initiative was timely. Once again my delegation's reply is negative. Why? Because while it is understandable that countries that are not NPT signatories may ignore the agenda established in 1995, it is not to be expected that the Treaty signatories and sponsors of the 1995 decision would gloss over it, or, even worse, implicitly regard it as obsolete, when it is on the way to implementation and the cut-off treaty negotiations have barely begun.

Neither the time chosen nor the suggested procedure — a conference on nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament — is right. Bodies already exist for the discussion of these matters. For States parties to the NPT the strengthened review process and the year 2000 Conference will provide the opportunity to assess past achievements, current projects and lessons to be drawn.

For all Member States of the United Nations, a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, which France supports and which it considers should be held in the year 2001, will be the occasion to prepare a new agenda.

Finally, it is normal to want to do better and to move faster. It is tempting to create the impression that this is possible thanks to the drawing up by some of an alternative agenda intended for others. But if the price to be paid is the destruction of an almost universal consensus, that price is too high when success is in doubt.

**Mr. Goosen** (South Africa): I genuinely did not intend to speak today, and members must excuse me if I do not have prepared notes. I will be referring to some notes I made during the interventions of the Ambassador of France and the representative of the United Kingdom.

Having listened to their remarks about the draft resolution, I am reminded of Shakespeare in that they "protest too much" (*Hamlet, Act III, Scene II*), because what the core element of the draft resolution is a call upon the nuclear-weapon States to demonstrate an unequivocal commitment to the speedy and total elimination of their respective nuclear weapons. No matter how hard they try, this language does not in any way undermine or reject the commitment which they made under article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). It asks that 50 years after the first nuclear-weapons explosions in Hiroshima and Nagasaki we call on the States that South Africa recognizes as nuclear-weapon States, "to demonstrate an unequivocal commitment to the speedy and total elimination of their respective nuclear weapons and without delay to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to the elimination of these weapons" — and that is language from an International Court of Justice (ICJ) legal opinion — "thereby fulfilling their obligations under Article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)". (*A/C.1/53/L.48, para. 1*)

I am sure that the representative of the United Kingdom and the Ambassador of France will agree with me that article VI as it currently stands in the NPT is unfulfilled. Surely that is not contested. I will return to that point shortly.

I will concentrate primarily on the remarks of the representative of the United Kingdom, which I think in large measure address the issues raised by the Ambassador of France, except for the element of the timing of the proposal of a new agenda.

South Africa at one stage possessed nuclear weapons and it destroyed them. I presume that for States possessing nuclear weapons the timing might never really quite be right, but we believe that the timing of the proposal in the draft resolution by the States that have associated themselves with it is the correct timing. That is largely an issue of opinion.

I want now to pick up on some of the points made by the representative of the United Kingdom. He said that the draft resolution repeatedly ignored the commitments by the nuclear-weapon States. I should like to ask him where in the draft resolution the commitments of the nuclear-weapon States are continually ignored. When I read through the draft resolution, and I think when everybody else reads through it, we find that there is repeated reference to the commitments by the nuclear-weapon States, including in the lead operative paragraph that I have just read: "thereby fulfilling their obligations" — and we can replace "obligations" with "commitments" if the representative of the United Kingdom insists — "under Article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)". There is also a preambular paragraph that has much the same kind of language.

The representative of the United Kingdom also made the point that the practical steps and commitments to participate by the nuclear-weapon States have been ignored by the draft resolution. But when I look at the draft resolution I find two preambular paragraphs that deal with the specific issue.

The two preambular paragraphs are — and I am sorry to be a little lengthy:

> "*Welcoming* the achievements to date and the future promise of the START process and the possibility it offers for development as a plurilateral mechanism including all the nuclear-weapon States, for the practical dismantling and destruction of nuclear armaments undertaken in pursuit of the elimination of nuclear weapons,
>
> "*Believing* that there are a number of practical steps that the nuclear-weapon States can and should take immediately before the actual elimination of nuclear arsenals and the development of requisite verification regimes take place, and in this connection noting certain recent unilateral and other steps" (*A/C.1/53/L.48, eleventh and twelfth preambular paragraphs*)

— and I would here read "including the strategic review that the United Kingdom has undertaken". I can assure the representative of the United Kingdom that it was exactly that review that South Africa at least had in mind when this language was being drafted.

And now I come to a favourite topic of mine — and I am sure the Under-Secretary-General will enjoy this — the NPT agenda of the principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. South Africa is accused — something I find slightly amusing — of ignoring and glossing over them, despite the fact that South Africa, of course, was the country that originally proposed these principles and objectives at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference. That proposal has largely been recognized as the basis for the agreement eventually reached at that Conference for the indefinite extension of the NPT.

I do not see how the draft resolution could undermine the NPT agenda. I would appreciate greater clarity on that. For South Africa it would be totally unacceptable, and I would be going beyond my instructions, if I were ever to undermine the 1995 NPT principles and objectives. The fact of the matter is that the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), which is the first element of that agenda, has been concluded; unless, of course, it is being suggested that the content of that Treaty, which was negotiated in the Conference on Disarmament, was not comprehensive and that further negotiations might be required under that particular agenda item.

The second point, on fissile material, that is raised in that agenda has been agreed. South Africa welcomed, as did all the other partners in this draft resolution that are members of the Conference on Disarmament, the fissile material treaty negotiations agreement reached in the Conference on Disarmament this year. We will support the restart of those negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament next year. That is a commitment that South Africa has already made.

There are no further elements specifically identified in the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference decision on principles and objectives. This draft resolution, therefore, to our mind, cannot be seen in any way to undermine that agenda. In fact, as my colleague from Ireland mentioned, it reinforces the agenda by calling for the fissile material negotiations to be continued and speedily concluded and also addresses the CTBT issue.

Nuclear tests by India and Pakistan: what certainly amuses me when this issue is raised, and particularly when it is raised in the context of South Africa, is that in every forum in which South Africa participates it has joined in expressing a negative opinion on the nuclear tests conducted by India and Pakistan, unlike some other countries which have spoken in this debate, which, in the most recent expression by the international community at the International Atomic Energy Agency General Conference, abstained on the relevant draft resolution. South Africa voted in favour.

South Africa and all the other countries sponsoring this draft resolution have, as I have indicated, participated and strongly put forward their views on Indian and Pakistani nuclear tests. We address specifically in this draft resolution the situation not only of India and Pakistan but also of Israel, the three States that are nuclear-weapons capable and that have not yet acceded to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. We call upon them

> "to clearly and urgently reverse the pursuit of all nuclear weapons development or deployment and to refrain from any actions which could undermine regional and international peace and security and the efforts of the international community towards nuclear disarmament and the prevention of nuclear weapons proliferation" (*ibid. para. 7*).

What stronger statement could there be than that? Possibly the next paragraph, which reads:

> "*Calls upon* those States that have not yet done so to adhere unconditionally and without delay to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and to take all the necessary measures which flow from adherence to this instrument;" (*ibid. para. 8*).

I ask again, what could be stronger than that, except perhaps the second operative paragraph after that, which reads:

> "*Calls upon* those States that have not yet done so to sign and ratify, unconditionally and without delay, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and, pending the Treaty's entry into force, to observe a moratorium on nuclear tests" (*ibid. para. 10*).

The accusation that has been made against us is absolutely groundless.

I come now to the assertion that the draft resolution fails to recognize the threat posed by States parties to the NPT which are in non-compliance with their obligations. I have attended all of the Preparatory Commission sessions and the Review Conference, and the way I recall it is that the delegations that have participated in drawing up the draft resolution all participated in statements and other measures which have addressed issues that have arisen out of this particular matter. It would be my contention that the whole thrust of the draft resolution, which is to propose the need for a new agenda on nuclear disarmament, is to address that exact issue. We are trying to achieve an agenda for a nuclear-weapon-free world. That would be a world where nuclear weapons would not be possessed by the nuclear-weapon States, by the States that remain outside international norms, or by any State that is in non-compliance with any obligations — whether under the NPT, the CTBT or any other agreement.

The draft resolution and the declaration from which it originates are serious attempts by Governments normally thought of as being in the moderate camp on the nuclear disarmament issue to put forward a vision of what is required to achieve a nuclear-weapon-free world. They have put forward the proposal on the need for a new agenda on the basis that there was a dearth of material on that issue. But, while many proposals have been made in many forums, there is no place where all proposals have been brought together and where — as here in the General Assembly — members of the international community are able to express themselves on that issue.

The draft resolution is not intended to undermine, criticize, or threaten. It is intended to unite moderate countries around the need for a realistic and moderate agenda for a nuclear-weapon-free world. That is a commitment we all undertook — nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States alike — in the NPT, which is being held up to us today.

**Mr. González** (Chile) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: With reference to the draft resolution we are discussing, I should like to start by voicing my ignorance — or the fact that I was misinformed by the Secretariat — because the representative of France has told us that the draft resolution undermines the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

As I understand it, that fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament has not been convened and there are serious problems about agreeing an agenda and difficulties about the suitability or timeliness of such a fourth special session. How can something that does not exist be undermined? In looking at it from my perhaps Cartesian/Latin American perspective, we do not find much logic in such an argument. With that proviso, my delegation agrees with the very well-substantiated presentation made by the South African delegation with respect to the draft resolution before us.

We are looking at the central conceptual core of the text. How can we not agree with it? It is entirely in keeping with the relevant instruments of international law — the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) for one. My country had some difficulty in signing and ratifying it but we did so in the conviction that we were moving in the right direction and despite the fact that it enshrines a level of discrimination with which many take issue. But with that reservation it does the work for which it was designed.

How then can this undermine something that it is in fact strengthening? Moreover, one cannot consider continuing to grant legitimacy to the possibility that certain States have a nuclear option and others do not. The globalization of the world, the extreme interdependence of our countries nowadays, and the essentially non-conventional nature of the present threats against our States have given rise to a completely new international agenda, and very clearly — a fact I underline — in this new agenda there is no room for the use or possession of nuclear weapons.

I am sure that all delegations here give pride of place to international law, to the establishment of a framework of resolutions on nuclear disarmament and therefore the conclusions of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in its 1996 Advisory Opinion, warned us of the obligation we have to undertake negotiations on this topic in good faith.

One of the preambular paragraphs points out basically that we must not enter the third millennium — which is amusing, because we are all talking as if on 1 January 2000 everything will change — with the prospect that some countries arrogate to themselves a right to consider keeping nuclear weapons for an indefinite period of time. This policy obviously exists if only tacitly, but it is not legitimate. If we look back on what should be our natural and fundamental terms of reference, it is after all the Charter of the United Nations. If we look at the inclusive competences affirmed and reaffirmed in Article 1 of Chapter I, "Purposes and Principles" the Charter talks of maintaining international peace. If one analyses the Charter one finds there is always the linkage between peace and security. I think I am right in saying that one never finds the word "peace" without the word "security".

Obviously the possession of nuclear weapons introduces a tremendous amount of uncertainty and insecurity, particularly for those countries that do not possess such weapons. If we were therefore to analyse and carry out an exegesis of the Charter we would undoubtedly arrive at the conclusion that we are not being consistent with the provisions, the doctrine, and the examples illustrating the most fundamental articles, such as Article 2, paragraph 4, which prohibits the use or threat of use of force, since the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties in Article 53, if I am not mistaken, states that this is a *jus cogens* right, which means something that is untouchable and cannot be circumvented, since it means preserving the existence of humanity. Obviously, the fundamental interests of humanity are not being safeguarded through the possession of nuclear weapons.

This is almost an extreme situation. The possession of nuclear weapons, by creating a tremendous amount of insecurity and uncertainty, creates a state of tension, leads to confrontation and can open the door to the possibility of the threat of the use of force.

If we analyse the operative paragraphs we might say that they are quite harmless and innocent, they merely reiterate, exhort and urge, there is no legal linkage here or binding mandate, or obligatory, compulsory obligation imposed on States, but we are urged to continue working on the agenda for international security for all nations and for all time. Within this context, we believe that operative paragraph 14 appropriately or adequately reflects the need for a complement to the efforts that are being made in a very central area of international relations. We cannot continue in this vortex, or may I even say this haemorrhage, of draft resolutions in which the topic of nuclear disarmament is deconstructed in some fashion or insufficiently emphasized without there being any kind of international conference during which we can agree on the importance or otherwise of nuclear disarmament and the importance or not of certain countries arrogating to themselves the right to possess nuclear weapons despite the opinion of the International Court of Justice. We think such an international conference would very clearly and consistently help us bring about the attainment of further objectives all of which are designed to strengthen international security.

We believe, therefore, that the draft resolution is wholly meaningful and is entirely in keeping with reality and the new international situation marked by international cooperation. Secondly, it is consistent with and strengthens existing international legal instruments and at the same time it works to dissipate some existing doubts and lends momentum to the much-invoked fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, which at this point, as we in this room all know, remains a virtual reality.

I finish on a personal note. I am grateful to you, Mr. Chairman, for having referred to me as the representative of Chile rather than by my name or by my title.

**Mr. Akram** (Pakistan): Like the representative of South Africa, I had not intended to seek to speak this afternoon on any of the draft resolutions, since it was our understanding that they were in the process of being introduced. However, following the comments of the representative of the United Kingdom and the Ambassador of France on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.48 and the introductory statement by the representative of Ireland, it seems that we have entered into a substantive discussion of the proposed new agenda for nuclear disarmament.

References have also been made in this context to the nuclear tests conducted by India and then by Pakistan. I should like, therefore, to take this opportunity to express some preliminary viewpoints on this draft resolution and on some of the comments that have been made here this afternoon.

First, Pakistan has expressed support and encouragement for the endeavours of the eight countries in trying to promote a consensus on a reinvigorated process of nuclear disarmament at the bilateral, regional and international levels. This is an endeavour worth undertaking under the current international circumstances.

For its part, Pakistan re-evaluates the draft resolution and its contents from the perspective of its conformity with the consensus achieved by the international community at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to Disarmament, which accorded the highest priority to the realization of nuclear disarmament. It has been pointed out here, and I think that my colleagues from both Chile and South Africa mentioned this, that the Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) outlined a very brief agenda — indeed, an agenda that does not reflect a total international consensus, since some countries such as my own were not party to it. In any case, that agenda is virtually exhausted.

The third point of that agenda, which spoke of nuclear disarmament measures, has now to be elaborated and specified. We consider that this draft resolution, as well as other draft resolutions on nuclear disarmament that have been presented here, are aimed at trying to elaborate what the international community can or should do next to promote the goals of nuclear disarmament.

We have our own views. We have studied the draft resolution — at least, the previous version — and have offered concrete comments on it to the sponsors. They have been able to take a few on board, but not many, and we still have problems with the draft resolution which I will mention briefly.

There are in our view three major omissions in the text of the draft resolution. First, there is no reference to the nuclear-war-fighting doctrines espoused by certain nuclear-weapon States, doctrines which emphasize the use of nuclear weapons or threats of use of force even against non-nuclear-weapon States and in very uncertain circumstances. This arbitrary retention of the use of nuclear weapons poses the gravest danger of use in the world today.

Secondly, the draft resolution does not contain any reference to the dangerous developments that are taking place in the fields of the militarization of outer space, anti-satellite weapons, and the development and likely deployment of theatre missile defence systems. These developments are likely to destabilize the relationships between the nuclear-weapon States and lead to a new spiral in the nuclear arms race. This is a matter calling for the urgent prohibition of the development of theatre missile defence systems and anti-satellite systems.

Thirdly, there is no reference in the draft resolution to the question of control over the large stocks of fissile materials at present possessed by a number of nuclear-weapon States. We have had reports that these stocks could fall into the wrong hands. Or they could be used for the purposes of nuclear proliferation. But the draft resolution, even in the paragraph dealing with the fissile materials treaty, does not mention specifically the need to obtain control and international management of these large stockpiles of fissile materials. These are three major omissions that we perceive.

We have some specific comments on the draft resolution with regard to some concepts, such as nuclear-weapons-capable States. This reference is imprecise, and it would be advisable for the success of the new agenda if greater precision could be added as to what exactly is expected of which State in the process of nuclear disarmament. We will suggest some changes to the sponsors of the draft resolution. We are told that they are open to further consultation and negotiation, and my delegation for one would be very happy to participate in such consultations in order to see if some of the problems we have identified could be addressed and overcome so that we would be in a more comfortable position with regard to draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.48, whose motivation we fully support.

In conclusion, I wish to raise one point mentioned by the representative of the United Kingdom and to which my colleague from South Africa responded — that is, to question the relevance of the nuclear tests conducted by India and Pakistan. I do not pretend that this is an irrelevant issue, but I would point out that the international community has addressed it, and it is our concern that some of the nuclear-weapon States are seeking to use this issue and to place an inordinate focus on it in various international forums in order to deflect the attention of the international community from the real problems in the nuclear arena — the problems of the threat of use of nuclear weapons and the existence of more than 25,000 nuclear weapons in the hands of certain States that are on full alert. These and other developments in the nuclear field are much graver in their global import than the tests that were conducted in South Asia. We are prepared to address that issue in a constructive way, and I hope that others who have spoken on this issue will also address it in a constructive and not a denunciatory way. We would be prepared to address that issue in that perspective. But let not the nuclear-weapon States deflect the international community from the real problem in the nuclear field, which is their failure to live up to their commitments for nuclear disarmament. That is one thing we should not allow to happen at this session. I urge all concerned to address that issue as the highest priority.

**Mr. Abdelaziz** (Egypt): The declaration of the eight States and the draft resolution presented today by Ireland are an attempt to overcome the serious concern of the international community over the latest developments in South Asia. Those developments demonstrated the need to unify international efforts to prevent the non-proliferation regime from collapsing and to consolidate its basis in a way that would allow for the achievement of its objectives, the most important of which is the speedy and total elimination of all nuclear weapons.

How can we in the international community work towards achieving that? To me, the only way is to work on the non-nuclear-weapon States, tighten the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) regime on them, ask them to comply with the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and work diligently on the fissile material cut-off treaty. Can we forget the nuclear-weapon States and the nuclear-weapon-capable States and try to ignore the latest developments, which would undermine the NPT and all our efforts in the disarmament field, or should we all try to show a united vision in addressing this problem?

No one will deny that efforts are being made by the nuclear-weapon States in the field of nuclear disarmament. The draft resolution itself in certain paragraphs praises the START Treaty efforts and other efforts made in this regard. But these efforts are not enough to show the commitment undertaken by the nuclear-weapon States in accordance with article VI of the NPT. There is a need to emphasize that commitment and to ask the nuclear-weapon States to do more and work more diligently towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

At the same time, the draft resolution deals on the same footing with the nuclear-weapon-capable States. It also emphasizes the need for their commitment to the NPT and the CTBT and the need for them to enter into the fissile material cut-off negotiations. These are all steps running in parallel with steps taken by the international community towards nuclear disarmament and leading, in the final analysis, to preserving the integrity of the NPT regime through the activation of nuclear disarmament measures.

Another very important aspect dealt with in this draft resolution is security assurances, which have gained more importance, particularly in current circumstances, and which require the nuclear-weapon States to present more effective assurances that would help consolidate the picture when dealing with nuclear disarmament issues.

Finally, the new agenda is not directed against anybody or against the NPT. On the contrary, it tries to consolidate the NPT. It tries to seek the full implementation of the three decisions and the resolution adopted by the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference. It tries to strengthen the CTBT system. It tries to make the discussions at the fissile material negotiations, to take place in Geneva, more meaningful and more fruitful, eventually leading, I hope soon, to a complete, effective, integrated system based on the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

**Mr. Felicio** (Brazil): My delegation did not intend to intervene in this debate, but feels compelled to do so in view of the strong and somewhat unexpected reaction from some nuclear-weapon States regarding draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.48, "Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: the need for a new agenda".

Since this seems to be a meeting for asking questions, I should like to ask one question of my own. The difference is that I will also try to give an explanation. The question is: why is such a reaction by the nuclear-weapon States unexpected? It is because their reaction goes against the Treaty obligations they freely entered into; moreover, it also defies logic and a clear opinion given by the International Court of Justice that the nuclear-weapon States should pursue negotiations in good faith aimed at the ultimate elimination of nuclear weapons.

Before dealing with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), may I say that Brazil — and I suppose other countries that have forgone the nuclear option — is often bombarded with pleas to join the Treaty. It has been argued that our support would endorse the best known non-proliferation and disarmament regime ever achieved. For years we were reluctant to accept the logic presented to us that a fair deal was made 30 years ago that the non-nuclear-weapon States would remain so, while the nuclear-weapon States would pursue nuclear disarmament in good faith. We recognize efforts made by nuclear-weapon States to disarm, but their commitments towards the elimination of nuclear weapons are yet to be seriously pursued, and, of course, are yet to be verified.

That leads to another question: what makes countries so different that some, the non-nuclear-weapon States, must have their non-proliferation commitments verified while the nuclear-weapon States expect their disarmament by declaration to be accepted as real proof without the appropriate surveillance by the international community? That is hard to understand.

When my Government decided to accede to the NPT we were convinced that it would add credibility to the Treaty and reinforce our credentials for participating in the debate on and in the quest for nuclear disarmament. When the Brazilian Senate approved the NPT it gave instructions to the Administration to pursue the other part of the deal struck 30 years ago: the elimination of nuclear weapons, which remains to be fulfilled.

These are some of the many reasons behind my Government's decision to join others in the declaration "Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world". That is why we co-sponsored draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.48. We are instructed to pursue, and will continue to pursue, the objective of nuclear disarmament. As Government representatives, we must be able to interpret the wish of our own societies. I humbly suggest that representatives of nuclear-weapon States who have intervened at this meeting try to interpret the wish of their own societies, which are clearly turning more and more against nuclear weapons.

Brazilian society has already decided on the purpose of the national nuclear programme. It is enshrined in our Constitution that nuclear energy can be used only for peaceful purposes. International commitments entered into by Brazil in good faith, and which we intend to pursue, go in the same direction. We have been acting in a coherent manner in this area by not requesting and not expecting from others obligations that we are not prepared to fulfil ourselves.

**Mr. De Icaza** (Mexico) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: I am grateful for the comments that have been made on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.48. We wish the Ambassador of the United Kingdom a quick recovery.

Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.48, principally, has more sins of omission. As the representative of the United Kingdom has told the Committee, there are four such omissions. It does not recognize unilateral and multilateral efforts towards disarmament that have already been made. It does not recognize the next step in the agenda adopted in 1995. It does not mention the Indian and Pakistani nuclear tests. Finally, it contains no reference to the dangers inherent in such testing from the point of view of the international non-proliferation regime.

These are four omissions out of the five shortcomings that the representative of the United Kingdom found in our draft. The fifth is not an omission, but is that the draft resolution advocates measures that would be inconsistent with minimum credible deterrence.

I wonder whether this is not in fact the sole genuine objection there is to the draft resolution. How can omissions be criticized, in particular when they refer to past events, in a draft resolution that is future-oriented, proposing a new agenda — not a retrospective effort but a prospective effort.

Very probably the representative of the United Kingdom is right. Probably we are advocating measures that are inconsistent with doctrines of deterrence. My delegation certainly hopes it is doing so because my delegation is convinced that the doctrines of deterrence in this day and age are not meaningful and there is no rationale for them, although every day new efforts are made to find ways to justify them.

The representative of Pakistan, at the other end of the range of opinions to which we have listened, also finds three sins of omission in the draft resolution. We will not be referring to the militarization of outer space, which is covered by another draft resolution, or to doctrines of deterrence, which is directly in opposition to what the representative of the United Kingdom has upheld, and there is no reference to the stockpiles of fissile material. In operative paragraph 12, however, there is a faithful reproduction of what the Conference on Disarmament had to say. In referring to operative paragraph 12 I should like to point out that there is a mistake in the English version of A/C.1/53/L.48. The operative paragraphs lack numbers. The Spanish and French versions have been numbered but the English version is not so numbered.

Operative paragraph 12, for those representatives with an English text, is the one referring to fissile materials in connection with the decision taken at the Conference on Disarmament.

Again for the benefit of those delegations, I should like to say that there are 21 operative paragraphs. It is one of the longest draft resolutions, but if there are still omissions we, the co-sponsors, are prepared to take into consideration any additional elements and will be very happy to include any reasonable elements that are future-oriented and not looking towards the past. If we were to look to the past we could go right back to 1946, but I do not think that would be very helpful.

Having always admired the Cartesian spirit, I liked the statement by the French Ambassador. She asked three questions of herself. So did my delegation when in June we embarked upon the exercise relating to this initiative. Is the concern about a lack of progress in the field of nuclear disarmament justified or not? It is. We have not seen any advances. On the contrary, we have seen failure. The Preparatory Commission of the NPT Review Conference failed. We have seen a lack of progress in the Conference on Disarmament towards the convening of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. We have seen that a crucial treaty, START II, signed almost five years ago, still awaits ratification.

So our concern about the rate of progress and the importance attached to nuclear disarmament is very rational, all the more so in the light of the statements we heard today in which the nuclear Powers told us in very careful language, as they always do when they talk about their commitment to nuclear disarmament. At no time did I hear an unequivocal commitment to a world free of nuclear weapons and a complete elimination of nuclear arsenals was in the offing. I heard nothing about that.

That remains the position of my delegation and that is why we are participating in this initiative. Failing an unequivocal commitment to the complete eradication of nuclear weapons, a world completely free of nuclear weapons, nuclear deterrence theories and doctrines will not change, nor will the part played by nuclear weapons in strategic planning or the defence of nuclear-weapon States change either. We will be taking steps and making progress that will not be very meaningful.

The co-sponsors of the draft resolution believe this, the non-governmental organizations believe this, and world public opinion even in the nuclear-weapon States also maintains this position. We are not alone. Is the agenda unrealistic? We hope it is realistic. We think it is proactive, positive and prospective, and we hope it truly does advocate measures that will render the doctrines of deterrence quite obsolete. That would be a realistic position.

Is the presentation of the draft resolution a timely one? Is this the right time or not? We believe that the international non-proliferation regime is very much in question. We have seen cracks in its structure and this initiative is not an attempt to undermine but to strengthen. This initiative has not caused those cracks.

What is the non-proliferation regime today? It is nuclear-weapon-free treaties and zones, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the decisions taken in 1995 and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT).

On what does it rest? It rests on some very basic premises. The first is that the obligations that are undertaken will be respected in good faith. The second is that the regime is designed to be universal. This year we witnessed events that have called into question these two premises. Whether the obligations have been observed in good faith is very much in doubt. It is sufficient to re-read the minutes of the Conference on Disarmament and also the records of this Committee's meetings. There is a great deal of doubt about the way in which the obligations have been discharged, and I am not referring only to article VI.

As for universality, it is indispensable to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, just as it is for the nuclear-weapon-free-zone treaties, the CTBT and even the decisions we took in 1995. The possibility of attaining that universality is called very much into question by the events that occurred this year. That is why it is necessary and urgent to strengthen the non-proliferation regime. The best thing we can do to that end is for all of us together to try to design a new agenda for nuclear disarmament. Let us not forget that the entire non-proliferation regime is only a step, but an indispensable and necessary step, towards disarmament. Only with a clear understanding that nuclear disarmament is something to be reached does the non-proliferation regime enjoy balance and meaningfulness.

That is why a new agenda is necessary, not, as some have said, a new agenda to replace the decisions taken in 1995 but, on the contrary, to clarify the third element of the agenda for nuclear disarmament that was adopted in 1995, which comes after the CTBT and after what we hope will soon be a fissile material cut-off treaty.

What comes next? Here we have some proposals which I believe should be adopted urgently. That is why my delegation has co-sponsored this important draft resolution. I agree there are omissions; there are a number of things we have not put in here. There are some things we could add to make everyone happy and elicit a consensus. Perhaps we will not achieve consensus this year, but we do not lose the hope of achieving consensus next year or the year after. This draft resolution, we hope, has a brilliant future.

**Mr. Goosen** (South Africa): I apologize for speaking again. The last time I spoke was to respond to the nuclear-weapon States. Having now heard an intervention by a State not a party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), Pakistan, I feel as compelled to respond as I did the last time.

I started my earlier intervention with a theatrical reference, when, referring to the statements which had just preceded mine, I said that it seemed to me that they did "protest too much" (*Hamlet, Act III, scene II*). Let me continue in that vein and say that Ambassador De Icaza is a hard act to follow, but I will try.

We are grateful to the delegation of Pakistan for the support and encouragement that it gives, as we are grateful to others for the support and encouragement that they give. The Ambassador of Pakistan refers to a total international consensus. Yes, we are seeking a consensus and we are particularly seeking a consensus within the middle ground of this issue, which has lain fallow for such a long time, with the debate on nuclear disarmament being dictated by the two extremes of that debate.

The proposal that has been put forward, draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.48, is not intended to be an agenda of partial motives. It is, as I have said, intended to be the agenda of the middle ground, which we hope will expand to form the total international consensus on how this issue should be addressed in the future.

The Ambassador of Pakistan referred to some major omissions, and the Ambassador of Mexico addressed some of those. I would add just one element to what the Ambassador of Mexico said, with regard to the stocks of fissile material. Pakistan, like South Africa, joined the consensus in the Conference on Disarmament on the establishment

> "under Item 1 of its agenda entitled 'Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament', on the basis of the report of the Special Coordinator (CD/1299) and the mandate contained therein" (*A/C.1/53/L.48*, para. 12*),

which allows the issue of stocks to be addressed in the negotiations.

The Ambassador of Pakistan also referred to a rather older text when referring to nuclear-weapons-capable States. This issue has already been addressed in this debate by my colleague from Ireland, who pointed out to all those participating in this debate that this language had been changed to read more accurately,

> "those three States that are nuclear-weapons capable and that have not acceded to the NPT have failed to renounce their nuclear-weapons option" (*ibid., sixth preambular paragraph*).

The Ambassador of Pakistan then went on to say that the nuclear-weapon States were trying to deflect the debate that we are having in disarmament circles today to address only the issue of nuclear testing. My answer to him on this issue — and I know the point was not directed to me, but it is all part of the same debate. The nuclear-weapon States are not able to take nuclear disarmament out of the debate, nor can the Ambassador of Pakistan take the nuclear-testing issue out of the debate. None of these issues can be separated. They are all part of the same issue, and our draft resolution attempts, I believe successfully, to address that issue.

The Ambassador of Pakistan said that he has some suggested changes. Our delegation would encourage him to continue with his engagement. He is correct; he has been engaged with the sponsors of the draft resolution; we have taken on board some of the suggestions he has made, and they are reflected in the text. We would encourage him to continue with that engagement, in the same way as we encourage the five nuclear-weapon States and all other delegations to engage with us on that. Those engagements have been particularly successful with the States that have participated — I underline "participated" — in engagement with the sponsors on the draft resolution.

I know it was particularly disappointing — and the nuclear-weapon States, I am sure, feel as disappointed as I was — that there was a lack of engagement by them in the meeting that took place between ourselves and them on the issue. We certainly look forward, if they will not feel it necessary to wait until the last moment to express their concerns, to being able to address them through engagement at an earlier stage as well.

**Mrs. Kunadi** (India): It was not my intention either to ask to speak today, but since several references have been made to India with regard to the "new agenda" draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/53/L.48, I feel it necessary to make the following observations.

We understand that the draft resolution was the result of consultations with several delegations. India was not involved in this process, except for two brief opportunities last week. Therefore, the draft resolution does not reflect our views on several issues contained in it. These relate not only to specific paragraphs but also to the approach to nuclear disarmament adopted in the draft resolution.

We will present our views on the draft resolution at the appropriate stage of the Committee's deliberations.

*The meeting rose at 5.30 p.m.*

United Nations

A/C.1/53/PV.17

# General Assembly

Fifty-third session

*Official Records*

## First Committee

## 17th Meeting

Wednesday, 28 October 1998, 10 a.m.
New York

*Chairman*: Mr. Mernier . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . (Belgium)

*The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.*

**Agenda items 63 to 80** *(continued)*

**Thematic discussion on item subjects; introduction and consideration of all draft resolutions submitted under all items**

**Ms. Kunadi** (India): I have the honour to introduce a draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.15 on the role of science and technology in the context of international security and disarmament, sponsored by Bangladesh, Bhutan, Costa Rica, Cuba, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guyana, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Kenya, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malaysia, Nepal, Nigeria, Pakistan, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Viet Nam and India.

This draft resolution, which India has traditionally sponsored, addresses an issue of importance to the international community, in particular to the developing world. The growth of science and technology offers immense possibilities for development, but at the same time there is a need to recognize that several of the advances have military applications. Some years after the end of the cold war military research and development remains a high priority in several countries. There is a continuing demand, generated by the military doctrines of major Powers, for ever more advanced applications of science and technology for military purposes and in newer dimensions of military conflict. For developing countries, access to scientific and technological advances for developmental purposes remains a priority issue. In fact, such access is often an impetus for economic growth and can have a positive impact on the world economy as a whole.

At the same time, the developing world has had to pay a developmental cost in view of the persistence of discriminatory control regimes which, in effect, are no more than exclusive groupings of countries that limit the exchanges of such technologies to exchanges among themselves while denying access to other countries that may require them for developmental purposes. These regimes are often commercial and economic barriers to normal trade. Not only are they contrary to existing treaty provisions, but they also impede the growth of an interdependent global economy. Questions have been raised about whether such regimes have been truly effective in achieving their stated purpose of strengthening the international non-proliferation regime, especially with regard to scientific and technological applications connected with advanced weapon systems and weapons of mass destruction.

We believe that the regulation of flows of dual-use goods and high technologies, to be effective and efficient, should be internationally applicable on the basis of multilaterally negotiated, universally applicable, non-discriminatory guidelines. At the same time there is a need to recognize that internationally negotiated guidelines for the transfer of high technology with military applications should take into account the legitimate defence requirements of all States and requirements for the maintenance of international peace and security, while ensuring that access to high-technology products and services and know-how for peaceful purposes is not denied.

We appreciate the efforts of the Secretary-General in the report entitled "Role of science and technology in the

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context of international security and disarmament", in document A/53/202, submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolutions 51/39 of 10 December 1996 and 52/33 of 9 December 1997. In resolution 51/39 the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to update and further develop an earlier report dated 17 October 1990 entitled "Scientific and technological developments and their impact on international security", document A/45/568, in order to evaluate the impact of recent scientific and technological developments, especially those which have potential military applications. In resolution 52/33, the Assembly recalled resolution 51/39 and its request to the Secretary-General to submit an updated report no later than at the present session.

With a view to advancing the consideration of the issues contained in the report of the Secretary-General, this draft resolution proposes in operative paragraph 4 that the Secretary-General seek the views of the Member States on this report and make recommendations on the possible approaches to multilaterally negotiated, universally acceptable, non-discriminatory guidelines for international transfers of dual-use goods and technologies and high technologies with military applications, in a report to be submitted to the General Assembly at its next session. It is our expectation that this will enable all Member States to reflect fully on the issues involved and facilitate progress towards a goal that is in the interests of all. We hope, therefore, that the draft resolution will attract the support of a large number of delegations.

**Mr. Hayashi** (Japan): I have asked to speak to introduce, on behalf of 39 sponsors, draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.13, entitled "Small arms". The names of 37 sponsors are in the document: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Croatia, Ecuador, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kyrgyzstan, Lithuania, Malaysia, Mali, Mexico, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, Nigeria, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sweden, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Uruguay. I am happy to announce now that there are two additional sponsors, Greece and Turkey.

Japan introduced a draft resolution on small arms for the first time in 1995, partly in response to the view expressed by the then Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, on the need to pursue disarmament not only in the field of weapons of mass destruction but also with regard to the small arms and light weapons that are actually killing people in hundreds of thousands.

Based on the 1995 resolution on small arms, resolution 50/70 B, in the following year the Secretary-General nominated the Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms, which was chaired by Ambassador Donowaki of Japan. The Panel's report was submitted to the General Assembly in 1997 in document A/52/298 and was overwhelmingly endorsed by the Assembly in resolution 52/38 J.

Since the introduction of our draft resolution on small arms three years ago, the awareness of Member States and non-governmental organizations of the programmes concerning small arms has grown remarkably. Many initiatives are now being taken and activities conducted at international, regional and national levels to tackle the issue of small arms. This year's draft resolution on small arms, L.13, is to further promote such initiatives and activities with a view to advancing them step by step and in as concrete a manner as possible.

The report of the Panel of Governmental Experts last year made various important recommendations, including, among others, those related to an international conference on the illicit arms trade in all its aspects. Without prejudice to the broader scope involved in the work of the Panel of Governmental Experts, this year's draft resolution, in its operative paragraph 1, decides to convene the international conference not later than the year 2001. It is a decision in principle subject to further decisions specified in operative paragraph 2.

In operative paragraphs 2 and 3 the draft resolution requests the Secretary-General to prepare a report to be submitted to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session with a view to arriving at an Assembly decision next year on the objective, scope, agenda, dates, venue and preparatory committee of such an international conference. The Secretary-General will seek the views of Member States, and it is expected that other views of Member States, including those already expressed on this international conference, will be reflected in his report. Furthermore, the Secretary-General's report in document A/52/298 of last year and a new Panel report to be submitted next year will also be taken into account by the Secretary-General in preparing his report.

In operative paragraph 4 the draft resolution welcomes the offer made by Switzerland to host the international conference.

It is the sincere hope of the sponsors and supporters of the draft resolution that its adoption will enable the

United Nations to demonstrate to the international community that it is genuinely concerned with the problem and is united and determined to tackle the issue of small arms urgently.

**Mr. Al-Nasser** (Qatar) (*interpretation from Arabic*): As this is the first time I have spoken in the Committee, it is a great pleasure for me to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the Committee. I am convinced that with your competence and knowledge we will attain the best results.

Qatar has had opportunity already to stress the sincere desire to make the Middle East a region free of weapons of mass destruction, as the Foreign Minister of my country once again emphasized during his statement to the General Assembly on 25 September 1998. All the Arab States share this goal, but obstacles arise from Israel's refusal to cooperate with the international community and the States in the region. Our Minister stated:

> "Israel is the only nuclear-weapon State in the region and the only State that has so far refused to sign the treaties relevant to the prohibition of such weapons and the prevention of their proliferation. If it persists, this situation will lead to tension and the repercussions arising from the imbalance of power it causes. Therefore, in our view, it is necessary and imperative to take concrete steps to eliminate these weapons from the region, so as to avoid the risks of launching an arms race that would further destabilize in the region." (A/53/PV.16, p. 31)

The creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone, especially in tense areas in the Middle East, on the basis of arrangements adopted among the countries of the region under the auspices of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) would strengthen peace and security both regionally and internationally. The report of the Secretary-General entitled "The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East", in document A/53/457, is strengthened by a resolution entitled "Applications of International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards in the Middle East", which provides a framework for the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. This resolution, GC(42)RES/21, was adopted by the General Conference of the IAEA on 25 September 1998. In paragraph 3 it calls upon all parties concerned to take the practical and appropriate steps required to implement the proposal to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

The desire of Member States of the region to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone is in conformity with the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly, devoted to disarmament, and the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and the General Conference of the IAEA, especially GC(41)RES/25, adopted on 3 October 1997.

The Secretary-General in his report A/53/379 welcomed the fact that all Arab States have acceded to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and are working towards the early establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

Attaining a framework for the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East is closely linked to achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the region. The durability of peace depends on the reformulation of strategic balances on a sound basis.

In conclusion, the State of Qatar will do its utmost to support the efforts towards the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East and invites all countries to further their efforts along these lines and to consider the relevant measures for the application and creation of this zone in order to establish a just and comprehensive peace in the region, to strive for a world free of wars and of weapons of mass destruction in the near future, until people can work for development, progress and prosperity in the service of all mankind.

**Mr. Valle** (Brazil): I have the honour of introducing to the First Committee draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.37 on the "Nuclear-weapon-free southern hemisphere and adjacent areas" on behalf of the following 54 sponsors: Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Barbados, Benin, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gabon, Grenada, Guatemala, Haiti, Indonesia, Jamaica, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Lesotho, Liberia, Malaysia, Mali, Mexico, Mongolia, Mozambique, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Samoa, Singapore, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Suriname, Thailand, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela and Zimbabwe.

This is the third consecutive year that Brazil presents to the First Committee a draft resolution on the issue. We are glad that the support for this initiative increased last year when our resolution 52/38 N was adopted with 131 votes in favour. It is our hope that the changes introduced to the draft resolution this year will bring even more support.

This year's text is basically the same as last year's except for two important changes. In the last preambular paragraph we included the expression "the freedom of the high seas", a principle already enshrined in Part VII of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. In the same paragraph the word "under" was replaced by "those of" after the word "including". Besides that, in operative paragraph 1 the word "entire" has been deleted.

These changes have been made so as to accommodate concerns expressed in relation to rights of navigation and passage through maritime space. Once again I wish to convey my Government's gratitude for the flexibility and spirit of cooperation shown by the delegations that took part in the negotiations. Special reference should be made to the efforts of those delegations, including sponsors, which, not being parties to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, could have had difficulties with the proposed changes but accepted them in the same spirit of building support for the text.

In the area of nuclear disarmament, one of the most significant developments of recent decades is that in several parts of the world the nuclear option has already been ruled out. The areas of application of the regional treaties, with the addition of the Antarctic Treaty, contribute to freeing the southern hemisphere, and the adjacent areas north of the Equator where the treaties apply, from nuclear weapons. Those States, in close consultation with their neighbours, renounced the acquisition of nuclear weapons and accepted stringent verification commitments to that effect.

Our initiative aims at achieving the recognition by the General Assembly, for the third consecutive year, of the progressive emergence of a nuclear-weapon-free southern hemisphere and adjacent areas. Such recognition should be considered as a confirmation of the commitments of the international community towards non-proliferation and disarmament.

The draft resolution, of course, does not create new legal obligations. It does not contradict any norm of international law applicable to ocean space, such as those contained in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. It does aim to recall the need to respect existing commitments under nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties and their protocols, to call upon States that have not yet done so to move towards ratification of such treaties and protocols, and to call upon States to consider further proposals for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament.

In addition, we are convinced that the promotion of the idea that most of the globe is nuclear-weapon free will undoubtedly have a demonstration effect and add impetus to the process of nuclear disarmament and to the strengthening of the nuclear non-proliferation regime. We hope for further sponsors and expect affirmative votes for this draft resolution from all States that support nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament.

**Mr. Tejeira** (Panama) (*interpretation from Spanish*): As this is the first time I am addressing the Committee, allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on the very skilful way that you are guiding the work of the First Committee.

The delegation of Panama, on behalf of the countries of the Rio Group, has the honour to speak on the subject of a nuclear-weapon-free southern hemisphere and adjacent areas. I should like today on behalf of the Rio Group to refer to an important initiative in the area of nuclear disarmament, which, for the third consecutive time since the fifty-first session of the General Assembly, is being considered in the First Committee. I am referring to the draft resolution entitled "Nuclear-weapon-free southern hemisphere and adjacent areas" submitted by the members of existing nuclear-weapon-free zones and supported by the vast majority of Member States.

Representatives will recall that at the fifty-first Assembly session the proposal to declare the southern hemisphere a nuclear-weapon-free zone was submitted for the first time. The parties to the Treaties of Tlatelolco, Rarotonga, Bangkok and Pelindaba joined in the initiative. Those regional treaties, together with the Antarctic Treaty, prohibited nuclear weapons in the southern hemisphere and in the major adjacent areas in the northern hemisphere. That situation was recognized in resolution 51/45 B, adopted on 10 December 1996.

In 1997 the initiative was repeated and was still more broadly supported because of changes made to the text and clarification submitted by sponsors with the intention of ensuring that the proposal was perfectly consistent with the non-proliferation and disarmament commitments adopted by almost all Member States, and resolution 52/38 N was adopted. At the fifty-third session the proposal has been submitted once again. The members of the Rio Group will support it and work constructively on it to ensure that all countries that support non-proliferation and disarmament join with us.

Given the recent nuclear testing in Asia, the draft resolution on the southern hemisphere is even more significant and points in the same direction. Without creating new obligations, it simply recognizes the regional prohibitions of nuclear weapons and requests that the denuclearized status of vast regions of the world be effectively respected. Our countries do not want nuclear weapons, and we wish to have them eliminated.

We call for support from all delegations for this draft resolution, which, of course, is perfectly in line with political and legal commitments of countries which defend non-proliferation and disarmament and which for many years now have been committed to the elimination of nuclear weapons.

**Mr. Sidorov** (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): As delegations know, the Russian Federation at the present session of the General Assembly has drawn the attention of Member States to important current issues, especially the matter of information security.

We feel that recently this question has acquired special significance in view of the qualitatively new stage of the scientific technological revolution in the world, that is, the sharp development and introduction of new information technology and means of telecommunications. The Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation sent a letter to the Secretary-General of the United Nations in which he put forward in detail our view of the problem of information security. That letter is contained in document A/C.1/53/3.

I wish now to present to delegations our draft resolution entitled "Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security", document A/C.1/53/L.17. I wish to emphasize once again that the Russian Federation's draft is of a procedural nature and is directed towards drawing attention to the need to look at the various levels of information security. The text distributed in document L.17 is different from the original text. We held discussions with a number of delegations when we were working on the text.

In the preamble the draft refers to General Assembly resolutions on the role of science and technology in the context of international security. That reference to previous resolutions recalls the relevant points of those resolutions. The preamble notes the considerable progress achieved in developing and applying the latest information technologies and their impact on the further development of civilization. At the same time it expresses concern that these technologies and means may potentially be used for purposes that are inconsistent with the objectives of ensuring international security and stability.

The operative part of our draft resolution calls upon all States to inform the Secretary-General of the United Nations of their views on their general appreciation of the issues of information security, their basic notions related to information security and the advisability of developing international legal regimes to ensure the security of global information systems and to combat terrorism and criminality in the field of information.

We feel that this broad setting out of the issue will allow all States to express their views and opinions on all aspects of this topical and multifaceted problem. We invite delegations to join the sponsors of our draft resolution. We hope that the draft resolution will be adopted by consensus.

**Mr. Nordenfelt** (Sweden): I have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.20/Rev.1 on the 1980 Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects. With your indulgence, Sir, and with the indulgence of the 50 sponsors I shall for the sake of brevity dispense with reading out their names. I wish to stress, though, that we highly appreciate their steadfast support and sponsorship.

The 1980 Convention consists of a framework Convention and four Protocols. Protocol I deals with fragmentation weapons. Protocol II concerns mines, booby traps and other devices. The subject of Protocol III is incendiary weapons. The last addition is Protocol IV, dealing with blinding laser weapons. The Convention and its Protocols constitute an essential and integral part of international law applicable in armed conflict. Their purpose is to place constraints on the conduct of wars by restricting the use of certain conventional weapons. When fully implemented the rules contained in the Protocols will sharply limit or eliminate the risks to civilians and non-combatants. Lives will be saved and suffering significantly reduced.

The Convention offers the framework for global negotiations gradually to refine or expand the areas covered by it. In 1995-1996 the High Contracting Parties convened an amendment conference to seek agreements on further restrictions. Sweden was honoured to be entrusted with the chairmanship, which was exercised by Ambassador Johan Molander. By the time the Conference concluded its work in May 1996 it had been able to strengthen Protocol II considerably and adopt the new Protocol on laser weapons.

It is important that this process continue. In its Final Declaration the Review Conference decided to convene a further review conference not later than 2001. This will offer the High Contracting Parties renewed opportunities to consider means to strengthen the protection against unnecessary suffering that can be offered combatants, non-combatants and civilians in armed conflicts.

It is with a sense of great satisfaction that I note that the Protocol on Blinding Laser Weapons entered into force on 30 July 1998. As of today 31 parties have consented to be bound by the Protocol.

Equally gratifying is the fact that 26 High Contracting Parties now have consented to be bound by the amended Protocol II, which, as a result, will enter into force on 3 December 1998. The draft resolution before the Committee reflects these positive developments and the fact that under the provisions of the amended Protocol its parties will meet once yearly to consult and cooperate with each other on all issues related to the operation of the Protocol. The draft resolution requests the depositary to convene the first annual conference of parties to the Protocol in the course of 1999.

The intention of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.20/Rev.1 is to promote the further universalization of this important body of humanitarian law. On behalf of its 50 sponsors I should like to express the hope that the draft resolution will be adopted by consensus.

**Mrs. Rovirosa** (Mexico) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The delegation of Mexico is pleased to submit on behalf of Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Saint Lucia, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay and Venezuela, draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.19 under agenda item 77, entitled "Consolidation of the regime established by the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (Treaty of Tlatelolco)".

The priority placed by the Governments of Latin America and the Caribbean on consolidating the regime to prohibit nuclear weapons established by the Treaty of Tlatelolco has been expressed once again in the high number of sponsors from the States parties to the Treaty of Tlatelolco and with the inclusion of two events this year: the ratifications by the Governments of the Dominican Republic and Guatemala of the amendments to that Treaty.

Draft resolution L.19 contains two new preambular paragraphs which take account of the ratifications by the Dominican Republic and Guatemala of the amendments to the Treaty of Tlatelolco. In its operative paragraphs the draft resolution welcomes the concrete steps taken by some countries of the region to consolidate the regime of military denuclearization established by the Treaty, and urges the countries of the region that have not yet done so to deposit their instruments of ratification of the amendments to the Treaty approved by the General Conference of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL) in 1990, 1991 and 1992.

We hope that draft resolution L.19, endorsed by the States signatories to the Treaty of Tlatelolco, will receive, as draft resolutions in previous years have received, the broadest support from the First Committee and will be adopted without a vote.

**Mr. Soutar** (United Kingdom): Our support for nuclear-weapon-free zones, on the basis of arrangements freely agreed by all States in the region concerned and embodied in appropriate treaties, is well established and I will not rehearse now the various concrete steps the United Kingdom has taken to this end. Nor need I reiterate our support for the Treaties of Tlatelolco, Rarotonga, Pelindaba and the Antarctic. Further, we fully support the principle of cooperation between existing zones in order to promote their common objectives.

Against this background, during the last two sessions of the First Committee we have consulted closely with the sponsors of the draft resolution on a nuclear-weapon-free southern hemisphere and adjacent areas — which this year has just been introduced by the Ambassador of Brazil as A/C.1/53/L.37 — in an effort to enable us to enjoy consensus on the draft resolution. But despite having achieved some substantial and very welcome improvements to the drafts, our key concerns still remained.

This year I am happy to welcome the engagement on the part of the sponsors in further constructive efforts to address our concerns. We also welcome the improvements that have been incorporated in the text, to which the Ambassador of Brazil referred. I fear, however, that there is still a risk that the pattern of the last two years may be repeated, and that is because our fundamental concern remains unaddressed.

At the last two sessions of the First Committee, with the United States and France, we set out our concerns in a joint explanation of vote following a negative vote. I hope that we will not have to do so again, and I have therefore taken the floor now in a further effort to seek clarification of our key point. Our concern, which I fear may have been lost in the minutiae of drafting detail is, simply stated: is it the intention of the draft resolution to create a new zone which would cover international waters? Yes or no.

If the answer is "yes", then I would have to ask how that would be consistent with the maritime rights of free passage enshrined in the Law of the Sea Convention, to which the draft resolution itself refers. If the answer is "no" — and I hope very much from what the Ambassador of Brazil said when introducing the draft resolution that it is "no" — then I ask what the draft resolution would add to the status of the existing zones, which already cover all the land in the southern hemisphere with the exception of a few small islands.

In this case, it seems to us, the draft resolution might bring out more clearly in its title and in operative paragraph 5 that its focus is primarily the promotion of cooperation between the existing zones, which, as I have stated, is a goal that we fully share. We have been seeking an unambiguous response to this question since the draft resolution first appeared, but we have not so far secured one. I should indeed be most grateful if one of the sponsors could offer one now.

**Mr. Kouwenaar** (Netherlands): As in previous years my delegation wishes to address the First Committee in support of the draft resolution introduced by Sweden in document A/C.1/53/L.20/Rev.1, on the 1980 Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects, generally known as the Convention on Conventional Weapons.

This Convention and its Protocols on devices such as landmines and blinding lasers that inflict terrible injuries are of special significance in the body of international law applicable in armed conflict. Protocol IV, in particular, even bans an entire category of weapons.

Taken as a whole, the Convention and its Protocols will help to reduce the suffering of combatants as well as of civilians. It therefore rightly deserves once more the particular attention of the Committee, and my delegation, which has been working closely together with Sweden over a number of years in promoting universal adherence to the Convention and its Protocols, is very grateful to Sweden for once again giving us the opportunity to reflect on the issues involved.

It is our firm belief that military necessity in armed conflict has to be constantly put against the humanitarian objective of preventing unnecessary suffering. It is important that rules relating to this fundamental norm of law of armed conflict are codified in international legally binding instruments. At the same time the effectiveness of an instrument depends on the adherence to it by all States. My delegation therefore fully supports the call, in operative paragraph 5 of the draft resolution, on States that have not yet done so to become parties to the Convention and its Protocols as soon as possible.

The Netherlands Parliament is currently finalizing its deliberations on amended Protocol II and on Protocol IV, on blinding lasers. The Netherlands expects to formally express its consent to be bound by these instruments early next year.

As Ambassador Nordenfelt noted, the process of further strengthening the legal instruments should continue. My delegation therefore also supports the call, in operative paragraphs 3 and 4, on the Secretary-General to convene, and on the Parties to attend, the first annual conference of High Contracting Parties to the amended Protocol II. I would like, therefore, to join the Swedish delegation in expressing the hope that this important draft resolution will be adopted without a vote.

**Mr. Akram** (Pakistan): I have asked to speak to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.36, on the conclusion of effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. I introduce the draft resolution on behalf of the delegations of Bangladesh, Colombia, Cuba, Egypt, Guatemala, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Viet Nam and my own delegation.

We believe that the need for security assurances, indeed the obligation for security assurances, in the nuclear world arises fundamentally from the provisions of the United Nations Charter. The Charter very clearly stipulates the provision that States have undertaken not to use or threaten to use force, and that means all kinds of force with any kind of weapon.

Of course when the Charter was written the existence of nuclear weapons was not within the realm of the declared knowledge of the formulators of the Charter, and therefore there was no specific reference to the threat posed by nuclear weapons and the possible response to such a threat. But we believe it is only reasonable and logical that the provisions of the Charter on the non-use or threat of use of force also apply equally and with equal force to the non-use or threat of use of nuclear weapons; that the provision of security assurances is an obligation deriving from the Charter; and that it is incumbent on all those States that retain nuclear weapons to be bound by these provisions of the United Nations Charter — the provisions not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons. That is a fundamental obligation. It is not a favour to be granted to other States.

This fundamental obligation was reaffirmed by the United Nations General Assembly in the very first resolution that it adopted on nuclear weapons, where it spoke of the need to outlaw nuclear weapons. Since then of course the world has moved in a different direction with the escalation of the nuclear arms race, the proliferation of nuclear weapons and the inadequate provision of security assurances.

The demand of the non-nuclear-weapon States for legally binding security assurances against the nuclear threat emerged during the 1960s. It crystallized at the 1968 non-nuclear-weapon States Conference which was convened by Pakistan but received a partial, inadequate response in Security Council resolution 255 (1968).

While noting the unilateral statements made by the nuclear-weapon States at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, the Final Document of that session called for the conclusion of an international instrument by the Conference on Disarmament. Unfortunately, despite the lapse of almost 20 years the Conference on Disarmament has been unable to conclude that international agreement.

During the cold war the Conference could not evolve a common formula for the offer of unconditional and credible assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States. All five nuclear-weapon Powers offered only partial and restricted assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States. One side excluded any non-nuclear-weapon State which was a member of a military alliance with a nuclear-weapon State. The other side excluded those non-nuclear-weapon States which had nuclear weapons on their territories. All four nuclear Powers excluded non-nuclear-weapon States which were not parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Only one nuclear-weapon State, China, offered unconditional and unrestricted assurances to all non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

It was the general expectation of the international community that with the end of the cold war reliance on mutual nuclear deterrence would decline and even be given up entirely. In such circumstances the nuclear Powers, it was thought, might be prepared to rapidly conclude agreements for nuclear disarmament and at the same time to offer binding and unconditional security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States, until all nuclear weapons had been eliminated. Alas, these hopes have proved to be utopian. I should like to review briefly the situation confronting the world at present.

First, the NPT has been indefinitely extended, and in the minds and dreams of some it has allowed them to retain nuclear weapons in perpetuity. This is a derogation from the concept of security assurances as a transient and transitional measure until complete nuclear disarmament is achieved.

Secondly, the commitment in article VI to nuclear disarmament, while it has been reaffirmed, has remained open-ended without any indication of even a notional time-frame for achievement. Therefore, the requirement for security assurances becomes open-ended, and that, we believe, is another complicating factor.

Thirdly, we now have new doctrines for the possible use or threat of use of nuclear weapons which did not exist in 1968 or earlier. These doctrines stipulate that nuclear weapons can be used and their use can be threatened in the case of the possible use or threat of use of other weapons of mass destruction — in other words, chemical weapons or biological weapons. This doctrine is clearly contrary to the commitment contained in Security Council resolutions 255 (1968) and 984 (1995) and the whole concept of security assurances that has been discussed so far within the Conference and elsewhere, and it is obviously another complicating factor in the work of the Geneva Conference.

Fourthly, quite apart from the fact that the ambit of the use of nuclear weapons is being reduced, on the contrary it has been further extended. This has happened in two ways. First, the membership of nuclear security alliances has been consciously expanded after the indefinite extension of the NPT so that there are now more States covered by the so-called nuclear umbrella than there were before. All those States are committed to the first use of nuclear weapons. The forces of all of those States have been inducted into training and military exercises with nuclear weapons, and all those forces would be provided, in the case of an emergency or conflict, with nuclear weapons for possible use.

The number of those States and the geographical area in which this doctrine of first use of nuclear weapons applies have been enlarged. That is a major complicating factor. The counterpoint to that is of course that some nuclear-weapon States which had committed themselves to the non-first-use of nuclear weapons have drawn back from that posture, enhancing the possibility of the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

Finally, there have been two other important developments. Two hitherto non-nuclear-weapon States have demonstrated nuclear-weapons capability. One has claimed nuclear-weapon status. That is a question mark. Are these States entitled to receive or to give security assurances, and if so, should these be different in nature from the so-called NPT bargain, since they are not parties to the NPT? Finally, there is one undemonstrated nuclear-weapon State presumed to be so, which is not a party to the NPT. How is that State to be treated — as a recipient, as a provider of security assurances, or as something else?

I have taken the liberty of pointing out these complications because under these circumstances those non-nuclear-weapon States which are not the beneficiaries of all the extended nuclear military alliances — in other words, the entire membership of the Non-Aligned Movement — are quite justified in being gravely concerned at the continued existence of nuclear weapons and the threat of their use. Their demand for binding assurances against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is not only legitimate; it has gained special urgency in view of recent developments.

The one positive development this year on the issue is that after several years of hiatus the Conference on Disarmament was at last successful in establishing the Ad Hoc Committee on security assurances. We wish to congratulate Ambassador Antonio de Icaza of Mexico on the imaginative and energetic leadership he provided to the Ad Hoc Committee in reviewing the various aspects of this complex yet strategically vital issue.

Although it was premature to draw any firm conclusions in the Committee, the work that has been accomplished this year in the Ad Hoc Committee indicates the need and value of continuing the negotiations and seeking to evolve legally binding and credible assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States.

Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.36 reaffirms the need for early agreement on effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. This objective enjoys wide support among the non-nuclear-weapon States. The draft resolution notes with satisfaction the establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee by the Conference on Disarmament this year and recommends that the Conference continue intensive negotiations, taking into account the widespread support for the conclusion of an international convention and giving consideration to any other proposals designed to achieve the same objective.

The negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on an internationally binding convention to provide assurances to these States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons would be a major step in the international community's endeavour to create a nuclear-weapon-free world. An unconditional and legally binding commitment of non-use against non-nuclear-weapon States would be a major confidence-building measure between the nuclear Powers and other States. It would remove the major impediment in the promotion of nuclear restraint and non-proliferation in certain regions of tension. Finally, it would facilitate the process of nuclear disarmament by establishing new legal norms which would outlaw the use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States and thus could facilitate agreements on the non-first-use and non-use of nuclear weapons.

It is the hope of my delegation and the sponsors that draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.36 will be adopted by the Assembly this year by consensus.

**Mr. Cordeiro** (Brazil) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The delegation of Brazil is taking the floor to respond to the question raised by the Ambassador of the United Kingdom on the draft resolution introduced by the delegation of Brazil and 53 other sponsoring countries on a nuclear-weapon-free southern hemisphere and adjacent areas. The question basically was whether or not the objective of the draft resolution is to create a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the southern hemisphere and adjacent areas. I believe that the answer to that question can be found in the statement made just a few moments ago in this meeting by Ambassador Valle when he said that the draft resolution does not contain, nor does it create, any legal obligations.

Given that, I would respond by saying it is not a question of transforming the southern hemisphere into a nuclear-weapon-free zone in a legal sense, but it is the objective of the States submitting this draft and the States supporting it to fulfil a desire that arose when the Latin American States created their first nuclear-weapon-free zone in 1967 through the Treaty of Tlatelolco and to fulfil article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT); that is, the ultimate objective of the international community is to rid the world, in its own best interests, of nuclear weapons of mass destruction — not only the planet Earth, but the space around it as well. I believe this is a non-ambiguous response to the question put to us.

The member countries of the nuclear-weapon-free zones under the treaties of Tlatelolco, Pelindaba, Rarotonga and Bangkok through this initiative wish to express their desire to the international community to see their part of the world free from nuclear weapons. I believe that this is an objective shared by States that have signed the NPT.

The response was provided by Ambassador Valle saying that this draft resolution does not create any legal obligations.

**Mr. Khairat** (Egypt) (*interpretation from Arabic*): On behalf of the sponsors, I am pleased to introduce, under agenda item 70, draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.40, on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. The delegation of Egypt year after year has submitted a draft resolution on the prevention of an arms race in outer space in cooperation with Sri Lanka, whose Ambassador was kind enough to coordinate consideration of this issue during the Conference on Disarmament artfully and with skill.

The draft resolution does not constrain States wishing to use and explore outer space. On the contrary, it would promote that and ensure greater transparency in achieving those objectives by strengthening the peaceful use of outer space. In order to achieve this objective the draft resolution was suggested so that necessary measures could be taken to prevent a nuclear arms race in outer space. It highlights the need for States to make a contribution to this end, in particular States that are advanced in exploring outer space, and calls upon those countries to abstain from resorting to any measures that might promote the arms race in outer space.

As in previous years, the draft resolution we are submitting highlights the need to adopt more measures to prevent an arms race through the Ad Hoc Committee, which met in Geneva and which ended in 1995. We believe that Committee is the cornerstone for the work of drafting an international treaty preventing an arms race in outer space.

Following the cold war we recognized that conditions were ripe for changing the position adopted by States towards disarmament, in particular because the international community has become more amenable to adopting conventions to prevent an arms race and to promote the non-proliferation of weapons. Last year's draft resolution received 127 votes in favour, and no State was opposed. Given that positive indication of good intentions expressed by Member States to prevent an arms race in outer space and our determination to comply with the mandate of the Committee, we hope that the draft resolution will be adopted by consensus, which would give impetus to the re-establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee.

**The Chairman** (*interpretation from French*): I wish to draw the attention of all delegations to the fact that this year there are 49 draft resolutions and one draft amendment. Of the 49 draft resolutions submitted, none focus on rationalization, and only 14 have been introduced so far. There are four meetings left, and I renew my appeal to all delegations to introduce the draft resolutions they are supporting as soon as possible.

*The meeting rose at 11.20 a.m.*

United Nations

A/C.1/53/PV.18

# General Assembly

Fifty-third

## First Committee

**18**th Meeting
Thursday, 29 October 1998, 3 p.m.
New York

*Official Records*

*Chairman*: Mr. Mernier . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . (Belgium)

*The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.*

**Agenda items 63 to 79** (*continued*)

**Thematic discussion on item subjects; introduction and consideration of all draft resolutions submitted under all items**

**Mr. Hasmy** (Malaysia): My delegation has the honour to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.45, dated 26 October 1998, entitled "Follow-up to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the *Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons*".

We are pleased to announce that the draft resolution is sponsored by the following delegations: Algeria, Bangladesh, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burundi, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Fiji, Ghana, Guyana, Honduras, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Jamaica, Kenya, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lesotho, Malawi, Mexico, Mongolia, Myanmar, Namibia, the Niger, Nigeria, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, the Philippines, Samoa, San Marino, Sierra Leone, Singapore, the Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, the Sudan, Suriname, Thailand, the United Arab Emirates, Uruguay, Viet Nam, Zimbabwe and my own delegation.

It is clear from the debates at this session of the First Committee that a large majority of Members of the Organization continue to be seriously concerned about the lack of genuine effort and the extremely slow pace of negotiations on nuclear disarmament leading to the ultimate elimination of nuclear weapons. Recent developments have increased those concerns and complicated the situation further. It is imperative, therefore, that the international community intensify efforts in nuclear disarmament with a view to realizing the ultimate goal of the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. This draft resolution is one such effort in that direction. It is based on, and is largely an update of, General Assembly resolution 52/38 O, which the General Assembly adopted by a large majority at its last session. The rationales contained in last year's resolution remain as valid this year as they were then.

The draft resolution underscores once again, in paragraph 1, the unanimous advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) that

> "there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control".

It is clear from this opinion that States have a legal obligation not only to pursue such negotiations but also to bring them to an early conclusion.

The draft resolution also, in paragraph 2, reiterates the call by the General Assembly in its resolution 52/38 O for

> "all States to immediately fulfil that obligation by commencing multilateral negotiations in 1999 leading to an early conclusion of a nuclear weapons convention prohibiting the development, production, testing, deployment, stockpiling, transfer, threat or use of nuclear weapons and providing for their elimination".

This record contains the original texts of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, Room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

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That is consistent with the solemn obligation made by States parties under article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to pursue in good faith negotiations on effective measures relating to nuclear disarmament and their determined pursuit of systematic and progressive efforts to reduce nuclear weapons globally, with the ultimate goal of the elimination of those weapons.

The sponsors of the draft resolution consider this unanimous opinion of the World Court on the existence of this obligation as a clear basis for follow-up actions by Member States of the United Nations in their determined efforts to rid the world of nuclear weapons.

In proposing the draft resolution at this fifty-third session of the General Assembly, I should also like to make a number of additional points, partly in response to comments made by those delegations which spoke against the relevant draft resolution on previous occasions. I should like to point out that while the draft resolution seeks to bring about the immediate commencement of multilateral negotiations — specifically in 1999 — leading to a nuclear weapons convention, its formulation does not exclude, and indeed allows for and encourages, negotiations on other aspects of nuclear disarmament, the entire process of which should lead to negotiations on a nuclear weapons convention. The draft resolution specifically mentions negotiations leading to a nuclear weapons convention, thereby allowing for the kinds of disarmament steps that the nuclear-weapon States themselves are committed to support.

It should be noted, as was noted last year by one delegation — to which I am grateful — that the draft resolution called for negotiations "leading to" and not "on" a nuclear weapons convention. The realistic approach taken by this draft resolution is therefore not incompatible with the step-by-step incremental approaches mooted by others, including the Non-Aligned Movement, and it should therefore be looked at with a positive and constructive attitude by the nuclear-weapon States.

My delegation readily admits that the draft resolution focuses that part of the opinion of the Court that pertains to the unanimous opinion on the existence of an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control. It should be recalled that the ICJ gave two main conclusions on nuclear weapons, one relating to the issue of the threat or use of nuclear weapons and the other relating to the obligation to negotiate disarmament. It is quite appropriate for the General Assembly to treat these two conclusions separately, as they require different responses. As the draft resolution is entitled "Follow-up to the advisory opinion", we think that two opinions together in one draft resolution would only confuse the issue, as delegations may be able to support one appropriate course of action and not the other.

The draft resolution, as reflected in operative paragraph 1, focuses on the disarmament obligation of States, because that conclusion was reached unanimously by the World Court, and there is little or no controversy over the meaning of this conclusion, unlike the conclusion on the threat or use of nuclear weapons, which has been subject to a number of interpretations. The implementation of this conclusion is entirely appropriate for the General Assembly, which has a number of mandates to promote disarmament negotiations.

To the point made last year by a few delegations that what was needed was further bilateral negotiations, and that multilateral negotiations could jeopardize the successful conclusion of bilateral negotiations, I can only repeat what my delegation stated when it presented last year's draft resolution. We said that we acknowledged

> "ongoing efforts and past achievements towards the reduction of nuclear arms through bilateral negotiations"

but added that these

> "bilateral negotiations address only the issue of the reduction in numbers of these weapons to a certain ceiling — not their total elimination or the changing of existing policies on the use or threat of use of these weapons" (*A/C.1/52/PV.16, p. 11*)

I should like to stress once again the importance and continued relevance of bilateral negotiations, but these should not detract from the importance of multilateral negotiations. Indeed, the two tracks could complement and reinforce each other. After all, nuclear disarmament is a matter of concern to all of humanity and not just the nuclear-weapon States.

There was also the contention that the draft resolution released the non-nuclear-weapon States from any disarmament responsibility. That is of course entirely unfounded and misleading, as the draft resolution calls upon all States to fulfil the obligation to negotiate nuclear disarmament. It does not single out the nuclear-weapon States only.

One delegation contended that the draft resolution removed the article VI obligation of the NPT in relation to general and complete disarmament, in response to which I wish to point out that the draft resolution before the Committee is on the implementation of the ICJ's advisory opinion and not on the NPT. While the NPT obligation in article VI comprised part of international law which was used by the Court, it also used other Government and customary law to determine its conclusion. The Court's conclusion that there is an obligation to negotiate nuclear disarmament did not mean any linkage between such an obligation and general and complete disarmament, nor does the NPT make a direct link. It merely states that there is an obligation to do both.

It was further contended that the draft resolution was silent on the fact that the Court concluded that there was not in international law a prohibition against the threat or use of nuclear weapons. My delegation is grateful to the observation made by one delegation last year, with which we entirely agree, that the Court did conclude that the threat or use of nuclear weapons was generally illegal and that it is incorrect to say that it allowed for an exception. The Court rejected the argument that there would be legal use of nuclear weapons, and said that it could not reach a conclusion on extreme circumstances.

For all those reasons, my delegation refutes the allegation made by those who have opposed the introduction of a similar draft resolution in the past that it is selective, contentious and unrealistic. It is none of these things. The submission of the draft resolution in its present form is merely a matter of practical applicability of the opinion of the Court in the context of the work of the First Committee and the General Assembly relating to disarmament. States which support multilateral negotiations that will eventually lead to the global elimination of nuclear weapons — as we are all committed to do — will have no reason to oppose this draft resolution, which seeks to do just that in the long term.

In introducing the draft resolution my delegation expresses its sincere appreciation to its co-sponsors and to delegations that will vote in favour of it.

**Mrs. Kunadi** (India): I have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.14, "Convention on the Prohibition of the Use of Nuclear Weapons", sponsored by Bangladesh, Bhutan, Botswana, Brunei Darussalam, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Kenya, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malaysia, Mexico, Myanmar, Nepal, Nigeria, Sudan, Viet Nam and India.

India and several other countries, many of them from the Non-Aligned Movement, have been proposing, through the draft resolution, negotiations on a legally binding prohibition on the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons to be concluded at an early date. Similar draft resolutions have received widespread support over the years, but we regret that no progress has been made on implementation. That has been due to the reluctance by certain States to allow the commencement of multilateral negotiations on the proposed convention.

The promise held out by the end of the cold war that with the reductions in political antagonisms there would be substantial progress towards the reduction and elimination of nuclear weapons has been belied. The international situation continues to be characterized by a nuclearized global order wherein nuclear weapons are viewed by some as a legitimate currency of power and a select few claim the right to possess them in perpetuity. Nuclear doctrines of some nuclear-weapon States espouse the first use of nuclear weapons. The international community must take decisive steps to delegitimize nuclear weapons globally as an essential step leading to their elimination.

The historic advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice of 1996 made international humanitarian law applicable to the use of nuclear weapons. Therefore, there already exists in humanitarian law a general prohibition of the use of these weapons of mass destruction. We need to consider further steps that can build upon the historic advisory opinion. A legally binding instrument specifically prohibiting the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is both pertinent and necessary to underwrite the existing provisions of international humanitarian law. There is a need to remove any ambiguity which may be resorted to in justifying the use of nuclear weapons.

Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.14 underlines the fact that the use of nuclear weapons poses the most serious threat to the survival of mankind; refers to the Court's advisory opinion that the threat or use of nuclear weapons would generally be contrary to the rules of international law applicable in armed conflict, that of the principles and provisions of humanitarian law; and expresses the conviction that a multilateral agreement prohibiting the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons would strengthen international security and contribute to the climate for negotiations leading to the ultimate elimination of nuclear weapons. The draft resolution reiterates the request to the Conference on Disarmament to commence negotiations to reach agreement on an international convention prohibiting the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons under any circumstances. Such a convention against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons would perhaps constitute the first genuine nuclear disarmament agreement.

We hope that this draft resolution will continue to secure the widespread support that similar draft resolutions have received in the past.

**Ms. Eshmambetova** (Kyrgyzstan): I have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.2, "Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia". The trend towards nuclear-weapon-free zones in recent years is evidence of the growing significance of regional movements in advancing the cause of global non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament. The Treaties of Tlatelolco, Rarotonga, Bangkok and Pelindaba have made an important contribution to the non-proliferation regime while also representing a significant step towards the ultimate goal of general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control.

In this regard, I am particularly honoured to inform the Committee that in addition to the sponsors mentioned in document A/C.1/53/L.2 — Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan — the following delegations have also joined in sponsoring the draft resolution: Australia, Brazil, El Salvador, Mongolia, New Zealand, the Philippines and Thailand. The support of these countries, representing various regional arrangements, is of special significance to the Central Asian countries which are currently engaged in the preparation of the legal groundwork for the nuclear-weapon-free zone in their region.

We are also grateful to our partners from the Commonwealth of Independent States, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Ukraine, and the delegations of Italy and Turkey, which have reiterated their strong commitment to the cause of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation by co-sponsoring our draft resolution.

The draft, based on last year's resolution, reflects recent developments, including the informal meetings and consultations organized by the Department for Disarmament Affairs in New York and Geneva and the Consultative Meeting of Experts of the Central Asian Countries, the Nuclear-Weapon States and the United Nations, hosted by the Government of Kyrgyzstan in Bishkek in July this year, which concluded with the adoption of a joint communiqué. It calls upon all Member States to support the Central Asian initiative aimed at the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region, and commends their first concrete steps in preparing the legal groundwork for their initiative.

By the draft resolution the General Assembly would further encourage the five Central Asia States to continue their dialogue with the five nuclear-weapon States, initiated in Bishkek; request the Secretary-General to provide assistance to them; and decide to consider the question of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia at the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly under the agenda item entitled "General and complete disarmament".

To conclude, I should like to stress my sincere gratitude for the support voiced in the First Committee by a large number of States for the proposed Central Asia nuclear-weapon-free zone. In the light of these expressions of support, and informal consultations held with a number of delegations, we hope that the draft resolution will be adopted by consensus.

**Mr. Shah** (Nepal): I have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.5, "United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific", on behalf of the following sponsors: Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Fiji, Indonesia, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, New Zealand, Pakistan, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam and Nepal.

Except for the addition of a new preambular paragraph, this draft resolution is not basically different from last year's. In the new paragraph the idea of the creation of an educational and training programme for peace and disarmament in Asia and the Pacific for young people with different backgrounds, to be financed from voluntary contributions, is noted.

As previously, we have, among other things, welcomed the report of the Secretary-General (A/53/323), in which he expresses his belief that the mandate of the Centre remains valid and that it can play a useful role in fostering a climate of cooperation and disarmament in the region. The draft resolution also commends the useful activities carried out by the Centre in encouraging regional and subregional dialogue for the enhancement of openness, transparency and confidence-building, as well as the promotion of disarmament and security through the organization of regional meetings, the process known as the "Kathmandu process".

In its operative paragraphs the draft resolution, as usual, would have the General Assembly reaffirm its strong support for the continued operation and further strengthening of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, and underscore the importance of the "Kathmandu process" as a powerful vehicle for the development of the practice of region-wide security and disarmament dialogue. It also expresses appreciation for the continued political support and financial contributions to the Regional Centre so essential for its operation. In addition, the draft reiterates the appeal to Member States, in particular those within the Asia-Pacific region, as well as to international governmental and non-governmental organizations and foundations, to continue to make voluntary contributions with a view to strengthening the programme of activities of the Centre.

The draft resolution contains requests to the Secretary-General to provide the necessary support, within existing resources, to the Regional Centre in carrying out its programme of activities; and to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session on its implementation.

It is the earnest hope of the sponsors that the draft resolution will be adopted by consensus. Its unanimous adoption by the General Assembly will be powerful support for the Centre as a useful forum for meetings for disarmament and peace and for security and confidence-building in the Asia-Pacific region.

**Mr. Enkhsaikhan** (Mongolia): I have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.10/Rev.1, "Mongolia's international security and nuclear-weapon-free status", of which the Philippines has just become a sponsor. Since my delegation spoke on a related issue a few days ago as part of its contribution to the thematic discussion, I shall be quite brief.

This draft resolution is a product of long, serious consultations and delicate negotiations, of which the fact that a revision has been issued this morning is an example. The draft resolution addresses Mongolia's declared nuclear-weapon-free policy, which enjoys widespread international support. The negotiations have shown that accepting that policy and following the formula of the operation of nuclear-weapon-free zones does not seem to be, at least at present, fully applicable when it comes to single States, especially with respect to a State situated between two nuclear-weapon States. However, this did not discourage us Mongolians or our negotiating partners.

As a result of the consultations and negotiations, we have come to the conclusion that for a small State geopolitically located like Mongolia, its nuclear-weapon-free status would be stronger and durable if its overall security were internationally recognized and guaranteed. That understanding is the basis of the concept of the draft resolution and, in fact, of the very approach to this question. My delegation believes that given such an understanding, and with the necessary political will, we could arrive quite soon at a concrete special arrangement that would accommodate the particular interests and needs of Mongolia, including the strengthening of its nuclear-weapon-free status, as well as the legitimate interests of its neighbours and of stability in the region in general.

By the preambular part of the draft resolution the General Assembly would take note of the support that Mongolia's initiative already enjoys and the fact that a nuclear-weapon-free status is one means of ensuring the national security of States. By its operative part the General Assembly would welcome the declaration by Mongolia of its nuclear-weapon-free status, and endorse and support Mongolia's good-neighbourly and balanced relationship with its neighbours as an important element of strengthening regional peace, security and stability.

Operative paragraph 3 is, so to speak, the soul of the draft resolution. It proceeds from the notion that nuclear-weapon-free status is part of Mongolia's overall security and that therefore consolidation and strengthening of Mongolia's international security is a *sine qua non* for ensuring its nuclear-weapon-free status. Therefore, by operative paragraph 3 the General Assembly would invite all States concerned to cooperate with Mongolia in this respect.

Since the appropriate arrangements to consolidate and strengthen Mongolia's international security and its nuclear-weapon-free status are yet to be defined, the General Assembly would ask the Secretary-General and relevant United Nations bodies to provide the necessary assistance to Mongolia and report thereon to the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session.

By operative paragraph 7 the Assembly would include the question in the provisional agenda of its fifty-fifth session.

My delegation expresses the hope that the draft resolution will be adopted by consensus, which would reflect the spirit of the negotiations.

**Mr. Hayashi** (Japan): I wish to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.42, "Nuclear disarmament with a view to the ultimate elimination of nuclear weapons".

The Government of Japan submitted a draft resolution under this title for the first time in 1994 to demonstrate the clear commitment of the international community to the elimination of nuclear weapons. It was also intended to prepare favourable ground for the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) Review and Extension Conference the following year.

The principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament adopted at that Conference in 1995 reflected this idea, referring exclusively to the ultimate elimination of nuclear weapons as the common goal of the international community. Since then successive resolutions have been adopted with the support of the overwhelming majority of United Nations Member States, including, last year, all the nuclear-weapon States. We thus consider our initial aim of gaining the commitment of all States to the elimination of nuclear weapons to have been achieved. Against this background Japan would like to propose that we move a step forward and, to this end, is submitting a new draft resolution.

I would like simply to touch upon some of the new and more salient points of our draft resolution. The fifth and seventh preambular paragraphs would have the General Assembly welcome recent positive developments in the promotion of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, such as the accession by Brazil to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the decision of the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva to establish an ad hoc committee on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

By operative paragraphs 1 and 2 the General Assembly would reaffirm the importance of achieving both the universality and the full implementation of the NPT, reflecting the view of the Government of Japan that the NPT is the cornerstone of efforts towards the ultimate elimination of nuclear weapons.

Operative paragraph 4 describes several concrete and realistic actions which should be pursued both multilaterally and among the nuclear-weapon States immediately or in the near future. This reflects the Japanese Government's long-standing view that the best way to promote nuclear disarmament is the step-by-step approach, adopting concrete and realistic measures wherever possible.

The three multilateral measures mentioned in paragraph 4 are: the early signature and ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT); the early conclusion of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices; and the commencement of multilateral discussions on possible steps to follow the fissile material cut-off treaty.

In addition, the same paragraph refers to three measures which should be pursued by the nuclear-weapon States. They are: the advancement of the START process; unilateral measures for the reduction of nuclear arsenals; and the commencement, at an appropriate stage, of negotiations on the reduction of nuclear weapons among the five nuclear-weapon States.

In operative paragraph 7 the General Assembly would call upon all States to redouble their efforts to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons.

This year has witnessed both positive and negative developments in the field of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, and in future may be remembered as a critical year for that reason. The Government of Japan strongly believes that the international community should not succumb to inertia, but should press ahead further in consolidating its commitment to nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. It also believes that, while acknowledging divergent views on how to reach the goal of eliminating nuclear weapons, we must find common ground if we are to move forward. The text before us was drafted with a view to bridging the gaps between those different views.

Japan hopes that its views are shared by all United Nations Member States and that an overwhelming majority of them will support this draft resolution.

**Mr. Calovski** (the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia): I have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.44, on the maintenance of international security — prevention of the violent disintegration of States, on behalf of the delegations of Andorra, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Congo, the

Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Ecuador, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Monaco, the Netherlands, Norway, the Philippines, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, the Russian Federation, San Marino, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and the Republic of Macedonia.

Let me first inform the Committee of a slight change to the seventh preambular paragraph, which should now read:

> "*Convinced* of the necessity to enhance the overall conflict prevention and resolution capability of the United Nations system to prevent the outbreak of conflicts".

Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.44 would be the second resolution of the General Assembly to address the subject of the violent disintegration of States. The first time the Committee addressed the subject was two years ago, when the General Assembly, on the Committee's recommendation, adopted resolution 51/55 of 10 December 1996.

Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.44 addresses one of the most important aspects of the maintenance of international security, the prevention of the violent disintegration of States. It addresses the subject in a forward-looking and determined way. The emergence of new opportunities for building a peaceful world, according to draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.44, can be realized only by observance of the provisions of the United Nations Charter and international law.

Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.44 expresses deep concern that at present, situations which may threaten international peace and security persist in spite of the efforts of the United Nations — to put an end to them — and to prevent the occurrence of such situations in the future, and stresses the necessity to enhance the capacity of the United Nations system to prevent the outbreak of conflicts.

Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.44 stresses the importance of the activities of international organizations such as the Organization of African Unity, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Organization of American States, the Association of South-East Asian Nations, the Council of Europe, the League of Arab States and the Organization of the Islamic Conference, aimed at preventing the violent disintegration of States, maintaining international peace and security and promoting international cooperation for development.

Further, A/C.1/53/L.44 considers that the violent disintegration of States is a threat to international peace and security. Noting that the vast majority of violent conflicts at present are conflicts within States, it affirms the need for United Nations measures to help prevent the violent disintegration of States, thereby enhancing the maintenance of international peace and security and the economic and social advancement of all peoples.

In its operative part, A/C.1/53/L.44 calls upon all States, the relevant international organizations and competent organs of the United Nations to continue to undertake measures in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations as appropriate to eliminate threats to international peace and security and to help prevent conflicts which can lead to the violent disintegration of States. It stresses the importance of good-neighbourliness and the development of friendly relations among States to the solution of problems among States, to prevent the violent disintegration of States and to promote international cooperation in accordance with the Charter.

Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.44 also calls upon all States to solve their disputes with other States by peaceful means in accordance with the Charter.

In operative paragraphs 4 and 5, draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.44 affirms the need for strict compliance with the principle of the inviolability of international borders and the principle of the territorial integrity of any State. In operative paragraph 6 it stresses the importance of regional efforts aimed at preventing bilateral conflicts endangering the maintenance of international peace and security.

Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.44 ends with the request addressed to all States and the relevant international organizations to continue to communicate to the Secretary-General their views on the maintenance of international security — prevention of the violent disintegration of States; and with the recommendation that the General Assembly decide to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-fifth session an item entitled "The maintenance of international security — prevention of the violent disintegration of States".

As can be seen, draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.44 addresses a problem of great concern in the present international political situation. We can say with great certainty that in the future our Organization will be preoccupied with prevention. The eruption of new conflicts must be prevented and ongoing ones must be resolved. That will contribute immensely to the improvement of the international political situation and international cooperation as well as the maintenance of international peace and security. The goal, therefore, of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.44 is undertaking measures and policies at the national, regional and global levels aimed at eliminating threats to international peace and security and the enhancement of international cooperation in that endeavour.

Finally, may I say that the preparation of a draft resolution in this Committee with the aim of its being adopted without a vote is not easy and is a complex affair. We have tried very hard to submit to the Committee a draft that will command the approval of all delegations. We hope that A/C.1/53/L.44 will be adopted without a vote.

I should like to take this opportunity to inform you, Mr. Chairman, and the Committee that this morning I had the great honour, on behalf of my country, to sign the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT).

**The Chairman** (*interpretation from French*): I now call on the representative of Hungary to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.6/Rev.1.

**Mr. Toth** (Hungary): It is my privilege to introduce, on behalf of the sponsors, draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.6/Rev.1, on the Biological Weapons Convention. The sponsors are Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Monaco, the Netherlands, New Zealand, the Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Peru, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, the Russian Federation, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Uganda, Ukraine, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America.

In its preambular part draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.6/Rev.1 notes with satisfaction that there are 140 States parties to the Convention, including all the permanent members of the Security Council. It calls upon all States parties to the Convention to participate in the implementation of the recommendations of the Review Conferences, including the exchange of information and data agreed to in the Final Declaration of the Third Review Conference.

The draft resolution recalls the provisions of the Convention relating to scientific and technological cooperation and the related provisions of the final report of the Ad Hoc Group of Governmental Experts, the final report of the 1994 Special Conference and the final documents of the Review Conferences.

It welcomes the reaffirmation made by the Final Declaration of the Fourth Review Conference that under all circumstances the use of biological weapons and their development, production and stockpiling are effectively prohibited under article I of the Convention.

The draft resolution recalls further the decision of the 1994 Special Conference of the States Parties to the Convention, which established an ad hoc group open to States parties whose objective should be to consider appropriate measures, including possible verification measures, and draft proposals to strengthen the Convention, to be included, as appropriate, in a legally binding instrument to be submitted for the consideration of the States parties.

Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.6/Rev.1 recalls the Final Document of the Durban Conference of the Non-Aligned Countries, in which the heads of State or Government noted the progress achieved so far in negotiating a protocol, stressed the importance of achieving further substantive progress for the conclusion of a universally acceptable and legally binding instrument designed to strengthen the Convention and reaffirmed the decision of the Fourth Review Conference urging the conclusion of the negotiations by the Ad Hoc Group as soon as possible before the commencement of the Fifth Review Conference.

The draft resolution further recalls the Declaration of the informal Ministerial Meeting held recently in New York, in which the participants and the sponsors affirmed their strong support for the Convention and for strengthening the effectiveness and improving the implementation of the Convention.

In its operative part, draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.6/Rev.1 welcomes the progress achieved so far in negotiating a protocol to strengthen the Convention and reaffirms the decision of the Fourth Review Conference urging the Ad Hoc Group to conclude negotiations as soon as possible before the commencement of the Fifth Review

Conference and to submit its report to the States parties for consideration at a Special Conference and for adoption by consensus.

The draft resolution calls upon all States parties, in this context, to accelerate the negotiations and to redouble their efforts within the Ad Hoc Group to formulate an efficient, cost-effective and practical regime and seek early resolution of the outstanding issues through renewed flexibility in order to complete the protocol on the basis of consensus at the earliest possible date.

Finally, draft resolution A/53/C.1/L.6/Rev.1 calls upon all signatory States that have not yet ratified the Convention to do so without delay, and also calls upon those States that have not signed the Convention to become parties thereto at an early date, thus contributing to the achievement of universal adherence to the Convention.

May I express my hope that draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.6/Rev.1 will receive the same consensus support as similar resolutions received in previous years.

**Mrs. Besker** (Croatia): I should like to address conventional weapons cluster issues, specifically, agenda items 71 (d) and 75 dealing with the landmine problem and the related draft resolutions, one of which has already been introduced in the Committee.

Croatia is one of the world's eight most mine-plagued States, and therefore the landmine problem is one of primary concern for my Government. The issue is a standing topic in all our meetings with friends and partners, in particular the European Union countries and United Nations Secretariat representatives. As is the case in all mine-affected countries, the landmine problem adversely affects efforts towards reconstruction, economic development, social reintegration and reconciliation. It constitutes a great obstacle to the return of refugees and displaced persons, thus further hindering efforts at post-war social and political normalization.

The Croatian Government, with the help of the United Nations, has made progress in developing a national organization and overall system for mine clearance. In February 1998 the law to establish the Mine Action Centre was adopted. Its task is daunting. The more than a million mines spread over 60,000 square kilometres could take 15 years or more to clear. Although we do not underestimate the results achieved to date, we know that they represent a drop in the ocean of pressing need. These needs can be fully addressed only if the international community upholds its commitment and determination to assist technologically and financially the most affected countries in their national efforts while at the same time continuing activities to eliminate existing stockpiles.

As an illustration, let me point out that my Government has funded over 90 per cent of mine-clearance operations in Croatia. It is an immense burden for a country which has been suffering from the consequences of destruction caused by war and which has to cope simultaneously with the problems of an economy in transition. Since 1996 little international funding has been provided to assist Croatia. We therefore highly appreciate the donations made by Switzerland, Germany, Italy, Belgium and the United Kingdom, as well as by the European Commission and the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Demining. I should also like to take this opportunity to thank the United Nations Secretariat and member countries that have made United Nations technical assistance to Croatia possible.

It is in this context that Croatia associates itself with the Ottawa Convention. It participated in the Ottawa process from the beginning and was among the first 40 countries to ratify the Convention. We highly appreciate the special role that the Government of Canada, as well as the Governments of Norway and Austria, played in the Ottawa process. Croatia is looking forward to the first meeting of States parties and it welcomes the offer of the Government of Mozambique to host the Conference in Maputo. We also hope that complementary efforts will be pursued in the Conference on Disarmament which may eventually lead to a total ban on landmines.

Having said all that, I wish to put on record Croatia's strong support for draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.33 as proposed by Canada. It goes without saying that we also welcome and support draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.20/Rev.1, on the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and Amended Protocol II, introduced yesterday in the Committee by the representative of Sweden.

As I said, Croatia is looking forward to the Maputo meeting. We attach great importance to a well-coordinated and effective preparatory process. We believe that it is important to sustain the unique synergy among Governments, international organizations and institutions and civil society during that process. It is this particular synergy that made the Ottawa process such a gratifying precedent in multilateral negotiations. The full impact of the Convention will depend on its successful implementation. Eliminating anti-personnel landmines and assisting victims will require the long-term mobilization of much greater resources than have thus far been made available, as well as a more effective coordination of international efforts.

Croatia shares the concern expressed by the representative of the International Committee of the Red Cross about

> "the number of efforts at international coordination and data collection which have not yet resulted in new activities in mine-affected communities."

We look to the follow-up of the Ottawa process as the catalyst for genuinely advancing mine action throughout the world. From our own experience we can say that more forceful action is required at national, regional and global levels. This has to be coupled with the necessary funds to finance commercial demining, as well as assistance in specialized equipment, training and in-kind personnel support to the most affected countries. Assistance is also needed in enhancing the effectiveness of national capacities, including determining the appropriate role of the military in humanitarian demining.

The implementation of the Convention will be a particularly difficult challenge for mine-affected countries. They will have to implement the obligations of the Convention, which are many, complex and costly, and at the same time intensify mine clearance activities and victim rehabilitation. Croatia believes that this issue deserves special consideration in the preparations for the follow-up programme for the Ottawa Convention.

Croatia is ready to work hard with all countries to support the Ottawa Convention in its next phase. The Convention is indeed the framework for a comprehensive solution to the ongoing humanitarian crisis. We have to use it to the fullest extent possible. The draft resolution on mine action currently under consideration in the General Assembly could provide useful input into our deliberations on the preparatory process. The role of the United Nations in increasing international mine-related activities and cooperation will be very important. We are looking forward to the contribution of the United Nations Secretariat in that respect.

Finally, my Government would like to express its deepest regret to the United Nations Secretariat, the Government of South Africa and the family of the South African national who was tragically killed by a landmine last week while working on landmine clearance in Croatia. This latest tragedy is a sad reminder of the horrible danger of landmines and of the urgency of our deliberations.

**Mr. Grey** (United States of America): Since this is my first intervention in the First Committee, I should like to congratulate you, Sir, on your accession to the chairmanship, and commend you for the way you are running the Committee, and for your self-determination and discipline both in keeping the audience quiet and in guarding your figure as you go through the immense dining process that every Chairman has to endure.

I take the floor today to comment on the draft resolution (A/C.1/53/L.48) entitled "Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: the need for a new agenda". The United States delegation listened carefully to the discussion of the draft resolution on Tuesday, and I would like to comment both on that discussion and on the text itself.

In listening to the comments of its sponsors, we noted that while the draft resolution is one of the longest on this year's agenda, its supporters referred almost entirely to its first operative paragraph. They clearly consider that the heart of the draft resolution is its call in paragraph 1 for the nuclear-weapon States to "demonstrate an unequivocal commitment to the speedy and total elimination of their respective nuclear weapons".

I would have thought it unnecessary to reiterate once again the commitment of the United States to nuclear disarmament, a commitment we undertook when we adhered to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), but let me recall the steps we have taken, and are taking, in fulfilment of our article VI commitment. Some of the most important ones are described in draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.49, on bilateral nuclear arms negotiations and nuclear disarmament.

To review those specifics, let me point out that since the height of the cold war the United States has almost completely eliminated its non-strategic nuclear weapons, going from 15 systems in 1971 to two systems today. We have eliminated more than 10,000 nuclear warheads from our military arsenal, along with more than 1,700 missile launchers and bombers under the Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty and START I. We have not conducted a nuclear-weapon test explosion since 1992. We ceased the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons many years ago and have removed more than 200 tons of fissile material from our military stockpile. Once we have concluded the next step in strategic arms control, as agreed by the United States and Russia, we will have made reductions of 80 per cent from cold war peaks of deployed weapons. If this does not demonstrate a commitment to nuclear disarmament in deeds, not words, I do not know what does.

The logic of this paragraph also puzzles the United States. If the commitments we have already undertaken are sufficient, the world will gain nothing from their repetition. Alternatively, if the sponsors of the draft resolution do not consider these commitments trustworthy, why should we think they would find another one more reliable?

As I have noted, the sponsors of the draft resolution stress operative paragraph 1, but the United States takes the entire draft resolution seriously and urges the Committee to consider all its provisions carefully. We have held our counsel while we waited to see what would emerge from the deliberations the eight held with other members of this body. But now that we see a more developed text we have decided to make our views known. The United States could support some of the ideas it expresses but finds many more fundamentally misconceived or flawed in practice.

Let me elaborate: we reject the alarmist tone expressed in the first several preambular paragraphs. As Under-Secretary of State Holum said to the Committee a few weeks ago, the United States identifies with the yearning for more progress and the disappointment that the progress can be difficult and slow. This does not cause us alarm, however, but rather gives us the determination to work harder at the task of making more progress. What is alarming — but paradoxically not addressed explicitly in the draft resolution — is nuclear testing first by India and subsequently by Pakistan.

We have a similar reaction to the fourth preambular paragraph. The United States has had a long history of successfully controlling nuclear weapons and cannot accept the assertion that their mere existence leads to their use. For more than 50 years there have, of course, been no instances in which nuclear weapons have been used.

I turn now to the operative sections of the draft resolution. It makes some useful points on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and related issues, and we appreciate the revision of the paragraphs on cut-off to conform with the decision to start negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament. On the other hand, we join others in pointing out that the call for the three non-member States of the NPT to adhere to that agreement makes no mention at all of the recent tests by two of the States concerned.

I have already discussed operative paragraph 1. Let me repeat: the United States has made a commitment to nuclear disarmament. If that is not sufficient, we fail to see what a repetition would add.

The draft resolution calls twice for the "seamless integration" of five-Power negotiations into the current bilateral process. That sounds good, but what does it really mean? Have the sponsors considered the alternatives? Are we sure a five-Power process would be the most effective, or might there be a parallel process or processes? The United States does not have an answer to these questions now, and neither, we suspect, does anyone else; nor will they until the process has moved further along.

In one of the few concrete proposals the draft resolution contains, it calls on the nuclear-weapon States to de-alert those weapons. The United States has carefully considered this issue and has agreed with Russia on pre-launch notification of strategic launch vehicles and space launches. However, we believe the wholesale adoption of de-alerting measures leads to instability. Because such measures are unverifiable, a situation could arise, similar to that of August 1914 and the rush to mobilization, in which the potential that one country might quickly return to alert status could start a dangerous rush by all to do so, leading to greater instability.

We have instead targeted our efforts at improving command and control systems, a more valuable approach than wholesale de-alerting. The United States finds the call for the International Atomic Energy Agency to explore verification of a nuclear-free world premature and inappropriate. My Government has always considered verification to be a national responsibility and will certainly not abdicate that responsibility when we are dealing with the total elimination of nuclear weapons. We suspect other States will not accept that idea either.

The calls for the Conference on Disarmament to create an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament and for the convening of a nuclear disarmament conference, like much of this draft resolution, substitute more talk for concrete action. The United States has consistently described the problems with this proposal, especially the negative effect it could have on real nuclear disarmament reductions and talks with the Russian Federation. We believe no purpose would be served by running the serious risk of slowing or even stopping this proven and productive disarmament process. That position will not change. In any case, we are already fully engaged in nuclear disarmament discussions in multilateral forums. We discuss nuclear disarmament here, in the Disarmament Commission, in plenary sessions of the Conference on Disarmament, in the NPT enhanced review process and potentially in a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament should the international community agree to hold one.

Finally, the United States considers the affirmation in paragraph 19 of the draft resolution that a nuclear-free world will require "a universal and multilaterally negotiated legally binding instrument" completely premature.

The United States believes it is more important to concentrate on the practical measures needed before we reach that point rather than consider now the legal form of an agreement.

I conclude with some general comments. Although frustrated by the pace of progress on nuclear disarmament, we, and we expect many others, do not see the need to replace the existing agenda with a new one. We all know what has to be done to move us farther along the path of nuclear disarmament. These actions include the continuation of the destruction of strategic offensive weapons as provided for under START I; the completion of ratification of the START II agreements and the beginning of START III negotiations; the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty; the start of serious good-faith negotiations on a treaty prohibiting the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices; and the universalization of the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

That is an ambitious agenda, but not an unrealizable one. For us, arms control is an essential part of our national security policy, along with other aspects such as our commitment to collective self-defence and our system of security alliances. For us this is a seamless web. All the elements support each other. What we say here, we say elsewhere. When it comes to our national security we can never and will never put five bob each way.

Some seem to consider that this agenda is already accomplished. We do not. It includes tasks for the United States and Russia, for the other nuclear-weapon States, for NPT parties, for those countries that have not signed the NPT ,and for the international community as a whole. If we could achieve it we would have made a decisive step in the direction the eight nations call for.

But what does this draft resolution include that will advance us in that direction? For the most part it is an expression of concern that "something must be done". But apart from actions already under way, and the call for an international conference on nuclear disarmament, what does it contain? What will another international disarmament conference accomplish? It could well distract attention from the NPT review process and other established forums for negotiation and discussion of disarmament issues while giving non-parties to the NPT another excuse for their failure to adhere to the Treaty. The United States urges the sponsors, and others inclined to support the eight-nation initiative, to reconsider their approach, which offers little beyond the exhortation to do something. We can suggest no panaceas or easy ways forward. The progress of nuclear disarmament is deliberate and painstaking. It takes advantage of opportunities for progress when they arise. In our view, we do not need a new agenda, but a rededication to the agenda I have already outlined. It is a challenging agenda, but an achievable one if we have the collective will to pursue it. It may not be a new agenda, but it is a realistic one.

**The Chairman:** I call on the representative of Pakistan to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.34.

**Mr. Akram** (Pakistan): I have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.34, entitled "Regional disarmament", on behalf of the delegations of Armenia, Bangladesh, Belgium, Bolivia, Colombia, Egypt, Indonesia, Mali, Nepal, the Niger, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka, the Sudan, Tunisia, Turkey and my own delegation.

Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.34 is very similar to the resolution which was adopted by the General Assembly by consensus last year as resolution 52/38 P.

In the post-cold-war period, conflicts and tensions escalated and proliferated in various parts of the world. The brutal discipline of bipolar confrontation has broken down. Many States, especially the smaller States, have a greater sense of insecurity. This insecurity and rising tensions are reflected in the increase in the acquisition, development, production and use of armaments — mostly conventional arms, but also at times non-conventional capabilities.

The asymmetries in defence capabilities created by such situations lead to the dangers of aggression and the use of force. Conventional imbalances in regions of tension can lead to the search for non-conventional means of self-defence and deterrence. In this context, the relevance and importance of the regional approach to disarmament, especially throughout the region of South Asia, as well as in certain other regions, are self-evident.

Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.34 reflects the virtual international consensus in support of regional measures for confidence-building, non-proliferation and disarmament at the regional and subregional levels, as well as essential complements to the global efforts to promote disarmament and international security. The international community has now fully accepted the proposition that arms control and disarmament measures at the global level must be complemented by measures at the regional level which specifically address the particular dynamics of specific regions. Both global and regional disarmament must therefore be pursued simultaneously since both are essential to create the conditions for general and complete disarmament.

The draft resolution in A/C.1/53/L.34 affirms these propositions regarding the importance of regional disarmament. It takes into account most of the guidelines for regional disarmament adopted by the Disarmament Commission in 1993. It also underlines that regional disarmament measures, by enhancing the security of regional States and reducing the risk of regional conflicts, will contribute to international peace and security.

The draft resolution, while affirming that sustained efforts are required in the Conference on Disarmament and in the United Nations framework on the entire range of disarmament issues, calls on States to conclude agreements, wherever possible, for nuclear non-proliferation, disarmament and confidence-building measures at the regional and subregional levels. The draft resolution welcomes the initiatives that have been taken by some States for disarmament, non-proliferation and security at the regional and subregional levels and supports the efforts for confidence-building measures as well. Parenthetically, I would like to mention in this context that in the resumed Indo-Pakistani dialogue the first item on the agenda relates to peace and security.

It is self-evident that the relative importance of regional measures for disarmament will gain increasing importance as the international community moves to promote peace and security in various regions where conflicts and tensions prevail at present. This draft resolution seeks to affirm the world community's support for and priority attention to these endeavours. My delegation and the other sponsors are confident that the draft resolution on this subject will once again be adopted by consensus in the General Assembly.

While I have the floor I would like, on behalf of the Pakistan delegation, to offer some comments on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.42, "Nuclear disarmament with a view to the ultimate elimination of nuclear weapons", which has just been introduced by the Ambassador of Japan.

We believe, as we did last year, that the title of the draft resolution on this subject belies its actual content. The draft resolution relates mostly to nuclear non-proliferation and not to nuclear disarmament. Certainly there is no provision stated anywhere in this draft resolution that would lead to the conclusion that there is a "view to the ultimate elimination of nuclear weapons". Indeed, in our view the title of the draft resolution should perhaps read "Non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and the indefinite retention of nuclear weapons by certain nuclear-weapon States", because that would be precisely the import of this draft resolution if it were to be implemented.

The Pakistan delegation has informally provided to the Japanese delegation a list of amendments to the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/53/L.42 that we intend to propose. The first of these amendments would seek to delete the reference to Security Council resolution 1172 (1998) of 6 June 1998 contained in the second preambular paragraph of the draft resolution. That Security Council resolution, as is well known, was adopted without my country's being fully consulted. It was adopted *ex parte* almost, in a most undemocratic manner, on a matter which relates to our vital national security concerns. As the Ambassador of the United States has just said, on matters of vital national security interests we, too, do not put "five bob each way" (*supra*). Therefore, we would oppose any draft resolution containing a reference to Security Council resolution 1172 (1998). We urge the Japanese delegation not to become a party to this discriminatory process if it wishes to retain wide support for its draft resolution.

My delegation also suggests that the draft resolution should contain an expression of concern at the statements by some nuclear-weapon States that have the import of retaining nuclear weapons indefinitely. It should contain a call upon the nuclear-weapon States to undertake a step-by-step reduction of the nuclear threat and a phased programme of nuclear disarmament with a view to their total elimination. That is much more important than the emphasis put in the draft resolution on the universalization of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which the sponsors know is not likely to happen in the near future.

We also hope that a reference to the need for the early commencement of multilateral negotiations on nuclear disarmament in the Conference on Disarmament will be inserted in the draft resolution. That provision has wide and virtually universal support within this Committee. We are surprised that the delegation of Japan has failed to include that in a draft resolution which purports to seek nuclear disarmament and even the elimination of nuclear weapons.

My delegation would be prepared to enter into consultations with the Japanese delegation, but so far we have not received any response to our informal contacts. We will thus be obliged to table our draft amendments and to seek a vote on these at the appropriate time.

**The Chairman** (*interpretation from French*): I call on the representative of Belarus to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.1.

**Mr. Laptsenak** (Belarus): On behalf of the Chairman of the Disarmament Commission, Ambassador Martynov, who is unable to join us for this stage of the deliberations, and on behalf of the Bureau of the Commission, Algeria, Croatia, Ecuador, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ireland, Luxembourg, Peru, South Africa, Spain, the Syrian Arab Republic, Uganda and Belarus, allow me to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.1, on agenda item 73 (a), "Review of the implementation of the recommendations and decisions adopted by the General Assembly at its tenth special session: report of the Disarmament Commission".

This draft resolution is the result of open-ended, informal consultations among members of the Disarmament Commission. It has been prepared in a manner similar to that of previous resolutions regarding the Disarmament Commission.

In its preambular part, with the reference to resolutions adopted by previous sessions of the General Assembly, the draft resolution underlines the role of the Disarmament Commission in examining and submitting recommendations on various problems in the field of disarmament and in the promotion of the implementation of the relevant decisions adopted by the General Assembly at its tenth special session.

In its operative part the draft resolution suggests that the General Assembly takes note of the Disarmament Commission's report. It reaffirms the importance of enhancing interaction among the components of the multilateral disarmament machinery and emphasizes the role of the Disarmament Commission in promoting deliberations on the related subject matter and elaborating recommendations thereon.

As warranted by circumstances, certain appropriate changes have been introduced in the draft text to complement the traditional format of the draft resolution on the agenda item on the report of the Disarmament Commission. Allow me to point out several paragraphs which contain those changes, namely, operative paragraphs 4, 5, 7 and 8.

Special reference in the operative part of the draft resolution is made to the successful conclusion of the review of the Disarmament Commission's work in accordance with General Assembly resolution 52/12 B of 19 December 1997. As members know, last summer at the resumed session of the First Committee, the Commission introduced the consensus text containing the agreed set of measures on the streamlining of the work of the Disarmament Commission with a view to its reform. Members may recall in this respect the resultant General Assembly decision 52/492 adopted on 8 September 1998.

Of particular importance is the consensus reached by the Disarmament Commission at its 1998 substantive session to give focused consideration to a limited number of priority issues in the field of disarmament, bearing in mind the decision to move its agenda towards a two-item agenda approach as reflected in operative paragraph 5 of the draft resolution. Since these measures would be implemented as of the year 2000, the work of the Commission in this general direction will certainly continue.

Operative paragraph 7 of the draft resolution recommends that the Disarmament Commission adopt the following items for consideration at its 1999 substantive session: the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned, and guidelines on conventional arms control/limitation and disarmament, with particular emphasis on consolidation of peace in the context of General Assembly resolution 51/45 N of 10 December 1996. The third item will be added to the agenda of the Disarmament Commission in 1999 with due regard to recommendations coming from the General Assembly at its current session.

In order to determine the subject matter of that third item, the Chairman of the Commission held a series of informal consultations with various members and, time permitting, intends to have one or two open-ended consultations with the full membership of the Commission prior to the 1998 organizational session. At this stage I am happy to note that consultations on the issue have been very positive and cooperative in spirit. I am confident of the positive impact of the decisions to be taken on the issue by the General Assembly at its current session and of the consultations that have taken place for further efforts by the Disarmament Commission Chairman to harmonize the views of delegations. Building on that, the organizational meeting tentatively scheduled for 3 December 1998 will adopt, we hope by consensus, the third item.

As members are aware, during past years the Commission has always met for three weeks and one day. Because of the crowded schedule of disarmament events, certain problems arise for those delegations which participate in the work of the Conference on Disarmament. In this connection, the concerns of these delegations were repeatedly aired during our deliberations. Thus, operative paragraph 8 requests the Disarmament Commission to meet in 1999 for a period not exceeding three weeks.

The rest of the text of the draft resolution remains the same as in resolutions of previous years. I hope — and it is the intention of the Disarmament Commission Bureau — that, with the indicated slight revisions and additions, draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.1 will enjoy consensus adoption, as have similar resolutions in previous years.

**Mr. Pearson** (New Zealand): It is a healthy sign that the First Committee is able to engage in a debate on an issue that the majority of its members regard as an absolute priority. As a committed sponsor of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.48, I wish to comment on some of the observations that have been made this week.

First, I should say that we have listened carefully to the comments made by the Ambassador of Pakistan on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.48. The observation that the draft resolution has several omissions is of interest to us. Some of those omissions are addressed in other draft resolutions. Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.48 is, we believe, very comprehensive as it stands. Some have criticized it for being far too long. This suggests to us that we may have got it right in terms of both scope and substance.

I also wish to comment on claims that the draft resolution undermines the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). We find this assertion very puzzling and wonder whether we are all talking about the same draft resolution. In draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.48 there is a clear and unambiguous endorsement of the NPT and an equally clear endorsement of the importance we attach to the enhanced NPT review process now under way. The draft resolution also explicitly calls for non-parties to sign and ratify the NPT. By my count there are five other references to the NPT in the draft resolution text. I think it is clear to those who have studied the text of the draft resolution that it does not in any way undermine the NPT. On the contrary, it specifically underpins and endorses that Treaty.

Another claim levelled at the sponsors of the draft resolution is that it does not address nuclear testing. We have been told that it should condemn such tests. We find this assertion to be curious, coming from delegations that only a few weeks ago in Vienna felt obliged to abstain on a resolution deploring nuclear testing.

Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.48 is not confrontational, but it is not intended to be comfortable. The issues it addresses are not comfortable ones for any government. Nor does this initiative provide comfort for some at the expense of others. It does not presume in any way to undermine the hugely important START process. Indeed, draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.48 welcomes the future promise that process holds.

We find it difficult to accept the argument that this is not an appropriate time to be looking ahead at the next steps in nuclear disarmament. When, may we ask, will the time ever be right? The issues we address are those that all committed parties to the NPT have an obligation to raise and the right to pursue. We do so because the people we are here to represent expect this Committee to demonstrate leadership in pursuing nuclear disarmament. The calls in the draft resolution are not novel, but like it or not, they are imperatives that will not go away. Above all, we see this as a "stand up and be counted" resolution.

**Ms. Burgois** (France) (*interpretation from French*): The statement I am going to deliver was in fact intended to respond to the Egyptian delegation's introduction of the draft resolution on outer space. The great variety of approaches in dealing with our subject matter makes dialogue a little more difficult, but nevertheless I wish to state my country's position on a matter that is really very important. At the outset of the session of the Conference on Disarmament in January 1998, I pointed out that my country attributed special importance to the fact that the Geneva forum deals with three subjects: the prohibition of the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons, the banning of anti-personnel landmines and the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

On 26 March 1998 the Conference decided to entrust a special coordinator with the task of exploring the possibility of creating an ad hoc committee in this regard. Nobody will be surprised in the circumstances that my delegation is coming back today to this item under agenda item 70. France's interest in this matter is not new. We presented specific proposals at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, in 1978. Some of them were subsequently retained. This interest then emerged on several occasions at the Conference on Disarmament, and guidelines for reflection were put forward, mainly in 1993. Very recently I have been able to note the renewed interest of many delegations in this subject, and recent developments in the international situation make us want to think about ways to avoid an aggressive — I repeat, aggressive — militarization of space, which could be a source of danger to the international community and the geostrategic balance.

Very recently, the North Korean launch on 31 August 1998, carried out without prior notification and seen initially as a missile test before being officially announced as a civilian satellite launching, showed the relevance of the proposal for a multilateral notification regime for rocket and missile launching, which France had presented in Geneva in March 1993. My delegation is well aware that this problem is vast and complex. There is no question of tackling the entire matter all at once. But it seems strange to me that the international community should disregard a problem that is so crucial and that it should not at least be able to initiate a long-term reflection on this matter. The matter is sufficiently topical and important to call for reflection on subjects that could meet with consensus and that we should define together.

That is why my delegation wishes to express its positive commitment to this issue of outer space by voting in favour of the present draft resolution rather than abstaining, as we did in the voting on the draft resolution submitted in 1997 by Sri Lanka, which was adopted as resolution 52/37.

**Mr. Bjarme** (Sweden): Regrettably, a distinct slowdown has taken place in the last few years as regards further concrete progress towards nuclear disarmament. The START process is partly stalled. Through their nuclear testing, India and Pakistan have gravely threatened the international nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament efforts. At the multilateral level, only recently, after two years of inaction with regard to substantive work, could the Conference on Disarmament arrive at a decision to commence negotiations on a fissile material treaty. The challenge remains to get these negotiations off to a speedy and smooth start in 1999.

As to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, its strengthened review process ran into considerable difficulties at this year's meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the Review Conference in the year 2000. In our view, a new and forceful political impetus is now much needed to reinvigorate and reinforce the nuclear disarmament process. We believe it is of utmost importance that the international nuclear disarmament efforts be pursued expeditiously and with a strong sense of determination, and that the current threats to the global nuclear non-proliferation regime be strongly and resolutely dealt with.

These twin objectives are firmly embodied in draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.48. Furthermore, the draft resolution sets out a clear and concrete approach for taking the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation process forward. This approach is based on the pursuit in parallel of a series of concrete and mutually reinforcing measures to be taken by the nuclear-weapon States themselves and by the nuclear-weapon States together with the non-nuclear-weapon States. Together these measures provide a road map for achieving a nuclear-weapon-free world.

It must also be underlined that our draft resolution in no way is intended to undermine or deviate from the vital work carried out within the framework of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). That Treaty constitutes the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime and an essential foundation for international nuclear disarmament efforts.

What we do in the draft resolution, however, is to call for expeditious implementation of that Treaty's article VI. A strong and broad backing of the draft resolution across all the groupings would greatly assist in reinjecting a new sense of urgency into the efforts of the international community to move towards a nuclear-weapon-free world.

**Mr. Goosen** (South Africa): I must admit that one of the characteristics of these types of debates, when one as a representative needs to respond to a statement such as the one we have just heard from the American Ambassador, is that unlike being able to read through a carefully crafted written statement, one can speak from the heart, openly stating one's case.

I regret that, after having initiated the debate, the Ambassador of the United States has been unable to remain behind to participate, but I am sure that he is ably represented.

The United States has raised issues which we believed had successfully been addressed at our last meeting, when the draft resolution was addressed in this thematic debate and I referred to the South Asian tests, the importance of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), and so on. But the United States also raises important new issues which need to be addressed and answered. The approach that I will take is to work my way through the statement made by the Ambassador of the United States and the particular points that I highlighted while he made it.

One point made very early in his statement, which I must say sent a certain amount of happiness through my heart, was when he said, "I would have thought it unnecessary to reiterate once again the commitment of the United States to nuclear disarmament". (*supra*) It seemed to me that in making that statement the Ambassador of the United States indicated that he in fact has no substantive difficulty with operative paragraph 1 of the draft resolution, which he correctly identifies as the heart of the draft resolution that has been put forward on the new agenda. He went on to say in a later part of his speech,

> "The logic of this paragraph also puzzles the United States. If the commitments we have already undertaken are sufficient, the world will gain nothing from their repetition." (*ibid.*)

Therefore, if an unequivocal commitment has been made by the United States to the speedy achievement of nuclear disarmament, then it would seem to me, from the words the United States Ambassador used, that fundamentally and substantively the United States has no difficulty with operative paragraph 1. I should emphasize that for that I am pleased and look forward to the United States being able to support that paragraph. It is an important paragraph. It calls upon the nuclear-weapon States to demonstrate an unequivocal commitment to the speedy and total elimination of their respective nuclear weapons and without delay to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to the elimination of these weapons, thereby fulfilling their obligations under article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

I was certainly pleased that the United States, as we heard earlier when we last undertook the debate, did not take, and clearly did not see, this language as an attempt in any way to remove the importance of the obligations that the United States has undertaken in article VI, and that in fact the feeling is that they have already made the commitment that is being asked for.

The next point that the United States Ambassador made, which I thought was important to pick up on, was that "the United States takes the entire draft resolution seriously and urges the Committee to consider all its provisions carefully." (*ibid.*) I join the United States Ambassador in making that appeal to all delegations represented in this room. He is quite correct. This draft resolution is not merely about operative paragraph 1. It is about all its paragraphs. It is about the need for a new agenda.

The United States Ambassador then went on to address some specific aspects of concern that the United States has with the text of the draft resolution. The first point that he made was that the introductory preambular paragraphs were alarmist in tone. Let me be frank and honest before the Committee. There is something I do every time I come to the United Nations to attend a disarmament meeting: I walk past the exhibit that appears on the ground floor of this building. I would encourage all representatives in this Committee room to walk past that exhibit. It is an exhibit of the outcome and the residue left after nuclear weapons were used in Nagasaki and Hiroshima. I walk past that exhibit to remind me of why I am here. Once one walks past that exhibit and sees the effects of these weapons, I do not think that one could be called alarmist because of the language included in the text of this draft resolution.

I do not make the point to try to score debating points, because this is not a debating point. I see the point that the United States is making on this particular issue, but I urge the United States to try to see the issue from the perspective from which we, the delegations that have put forward this draft resolution, see it. That is nowhere more clearly demonstrated than in our near environs, not very far away.

The next point taken up by the Ambassador of the United States is the argument that the draft resolution makes no mention of the recent tests by the two States concerned. Again, the draft resolution is not about nuclear testing. There is another draft resolution about nuclear testing, and we will all have the opportunity to demonstrate there our positions on the nuclear testing that has taken place, as South Africa was able to do in all the forums in which it participates, both nationally and in conjunction with others.

This draft resolution deals with the consequences of nuclear weapons. It attempts to set a new agenda, and I continue to believe — and I made this point the last time we had the debate — that it very forcefully takes up the point on the issue of the States that were responsible for the conduct of these tests. It does so in operative paragraphs 7, 8 and 10. For ease of reference — and I am sure, Mr. Chairman, you will give me a little leeway — I will yet again read out those paragraphs to refresh the memory, because it is some of the strongest language that I have seen on this issue. Paragraph 7

> "*Calls upon* those three States that are nuclear-weapons capable and that have not yet acceded to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to clearly and urgently reverse the pursuit of all nuclear weapons development or deployment and to refrain from any actions which could undermine regional and international peace and security and the efforts of the international community towards nuclear disarmament and the prevention of nuclear weapons proliferation".

In the statement that the Ambassador of the United States made he also referred to the NPT, but in this context I will also raise the NPT, because paragraph 8 of the draft resolution

> "*Calls upon* those States that have not yet done so to adhere" —

not just to adhere to the NPT, but to adhere —

> "unconditionally and without delay to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and to take all the necessary measures which flow from adherence to this instrument".

It then also takes the issue of testing head on. Paragraph 10

> "*Calls upon* those States that have not yet done so to sign and ratify, unconditionally and without delay, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and, pending the Treaty's entry into force, to observe a moratorium on nuclear tests".

It is my contention that one could not be clearer on this particular issue. The next point raised by the Ambassador of the United States, which I must say he raised in an interesting way — and it would be worthwhile to have debate and discussion on this matter, because I think we could both gain something from such a debate — was that de-alerting measures lead to instability. That is totally different from my concept of de-alerting measures.

The United Kingdom, I think, stated that it had taken steps like this, not to create instability we presume, but to slow down the reaction time that could lead to a nuclear-weapons exchange. That is the intention of de-alerting. It is not to create instability but to create stability through delay; in the time it would take for a decision to start a nuclear war there would be a delay as to when those weapons would be launched. Hopefully, in the time provided and the way these weapons are de-alerted, sense and good reason will prevail.

The next point raised by the Ambassador of the United States was when he said, "My Government has always considered verification to be a national responsibility". (*supra*) I should also like genuinely to engage in a debate with the Ambassador of the United States on this issue. They really do not understand — and I am being very frank — because I thought that at the heart of the Chemical Weapons Convention, and of the negotiations we are currently conducting on the protocol to the Biological Weapons Convention, in which I myself have played some small role, and on the whole safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), what we are establishing are mechanisms to verify, in the case of the Chemical Weapons Convention, compliance with that Convention, which bans those weapons; while in the case of the Biological Weapons Convention, the South African delegation is working very closely with the United States delegation to verify that those weapons are also banned; and in the case of the safeguards system, because the reference was here made directly to the IAEA, to ensure that countries meet the safeguards agreements which they have undertaken and their obligations as non-nuclear-weapon States under the NPT.

I have never really seen verification as being purely a national responsibility. I can see the national responsibility element to verification, but I could never see it as being purely a national responsibility. That is a very distinct point, and we would seek an exchange on it.

On the issue of the ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament — which are not quite the words the draft resolution uses, but we will provide leeway on that because the wording the draft resolution uses in this particular instance, an ad hoc committee "to deal with nuclear disarmament", is a little more ambiguous than the way the Ambassador of the United States puts it — those of us who participate in the Conference on Disarmament are all fully aware of the numerous proposals that have been made from across political groupings to have the nuclear disarmament issue addressed. With your permission, Mr. Chairman, I should like to go through one or two of those proposals.

First is the one by South Africa. Although I list it first I am sure you will not mind my prejudice. The idea is to deliberate within the Conference on Disarmament on the issue of nuclear disarmament and identify the steps that would be needed to lead us to this point. There is a concept that preceded this because of the frustration of nobody knowing how we were going to get to nuclear disarmament, the elimination of nuclear weapons, to which we have all, except for a few countries in this room, committed ourselves under the NPT. That is one proposal.

There is a proposal by your delegation, Mr. Chairman. The delegation of Belgium made a proposal in the Conference on Disarmament on this issue. There are proposals by the delegations of Japan, Canada and countries of the Non-Aligned Movement. This is not just a desire of the small group of countries that have come forward with this rather strange draft resolution — or so it would appear in terms of the reactions to it — but seems to me to have a much broader base of support. There is a desire by the international community, which comes from across political groupings, to have this issue dealt with in the Conference on Disarmament. That is why in the text of the draft resolution we do not refer to an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament, which is code language for all of us who participate in the Conference on Disarmament, but use the words "to deal with nuclear disarmament".

The next point I would like to raise is where the Ambassador of the United States said that he considered "the affirmation that a nuclear-free world will require 'a universal and multilaterally negotiated legally binding instrument' completely premature." (*supra*)

I should like to read the full quotation because that is only part of the quotation, and I think it puts a spin on the idea contained in the draft resolution that is not there. Paragraph 19, in full,

> "*Affirms* that a nuclear-weapon-free world will ultimately require the underpinnings of a universal and multilaterally negotiated legally binding instrument or a framework encompassing a mutually reinforcing set of instruments".

To me that seems clear. In terms of trying to ban chemical weapons we ended up with an instrument, and with the Biological Weapons Convention we ended up with an instrument. There will have to be at some point in time — and we do not raise the issue of time in the draft resolution — an instrument or instruments that will legally commit States not to aspire to nuclear weapons and not to attempt to acquire them. If that provision were not in the draft resolution, the weapon States as they currently exist today would be totally justified in having reservations about destroying their own weapons. While the threat of nuclear weapons proliferation remains and while the threat of a nuclear outbreak remains, and while there is not a verification system or a legal network to prevent it, we can never reach the point of nuclear disarmament.

Not only is the text of our draft resolution based on logic, but we have made a determined effort not to prejudge the issue. It says that there can be a holistic agreement or a set of instruments. In other words, it addresses both sides of the debate on this particular issue — the step-by-step approach or any other approach that one might wish to bring forward.

The Ambassador of the United States then goes through the list of what he regards as being the agenda. The problem I have with the listing made by the Ambassador of United States is that I do not disagree with it. I actually agree with and support the listing. But that is not what this draft resolution is about. In the draft resolution we acknowledge these steps. In the eleventh preambular paragraph we welcome "the achievements to date and the future promise" — what good words — "of the START process". In the twelfth preambular paragraph we say, "and in this connection noting certain recent unilateral and other steps" taken. There is nothing in opposition, but we are looking further down the track at what steps would be needed to take us to zero, that zero to which we have all committed ourselves.

I now come to my last point. In the last paragraph of his speech, the Ambassador of the United States said, "It could well distract attention from the NPT review process and other established forums for negotiation and discussion of disarmament issues". (*supra*) This concern is raised with the sponsors of the draft resolution. Because this is not what we intended to do, and to make it clear that it was not our intention to do this, we inserted paragraph 15, which underlines the point and states,

> "*Recalls* the importance of the Decisions and Resolutions adopted at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference, and *underlines* the importance of implementing fully the 'Strengthening the Review Process for the Treaty' Decision".

So the draft resolution in fact moves in support of the NPT review process and in no way tries to undermine it. As I said the other day, I would be far outside my instructions and would be unhappily looking to retirement in the very near future if I were to do anything that would undermine that review process. I have really tried to take a positive attitude to the speech of the Ambassador of the United States. We are deeply disappointed that he is unable to acknowledge the draft resolution for what it truly is: a genuine, reasonable and moderate attempt to seek the middle ground for achieving the self-undertaken obligation under the NPT to eliminate nuclear weapons. What makes this even worse is that we are convinced that those delegations that have spoken on this issue in this Committee realize the moderation of this draft resolution and the agenda that it sets forth. That is why they are on the defensive.

## Organization of work

**The Chairman** (*interpretation from French*): I should now like to say a few words about the current situation. Out of 17 draft resolutions in cluster 1, on nuclear weapons, 10 have been introduced. Out of four draft resolutions on weapons of mass destruction, three have been introduced. On outer space there was only one draft resolution, which has been introduced. On conventional weapons, two draft resolutions out of five have been introduced. On regional development, one out of three has been introduced. On confidence-building measures, none of the four draft resolutions has been introduced. On disarmament machinery, three out of eight have been introduced. On other disarmament measures, two out of four draft resolutions have been introduced. The draft resolutions on related measures and international security were not introduced.

Thus, out of 49 draft resolutions and one amendment, 22 have been introduced. There are still three meetings left: two tomorrow, Friday, and one on Monday. I would encourage delegations to think about introducing the draft resolutions as quickly as possible.

*The meeting rose at 5.20 p.m.*